IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AMERICAN SCHOOL COUNSELOR ASSOCIATION (ASCA) NATIONAL MODEL: A FRAMEWORK FOR SCHOOL COUNSELING PROGRAMS BY HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPALS IN THEIR SCHOOLS

A dissertation submitted to the Kent State University College of Education, Health, and Human Services in partial fulfillment for the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

by

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The purpose of this study was to investigate the implementation of the ASCA National Model by high school principals in their schools. The questions that guided this study were: (1) what was the experience of high school principals who successfully implemented the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) National Model: A Framework for School Counseling Programs in their schools and (2) what was the impetus for high schools principals to implement this model? Six principals completed a series of semi-structured interviews with regards to the implementation of the ASCA National Model in their schools. The interviews were transcribed and then analyzed utilizing Moustakas’ modified version of the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen method of data analysis for phenomenological research. Themes derived from the data analysis suggest that there is a common essential experience with regards to the implementation of the ASCA National Model by high school principals in their school, including seven major categories: (a) impetus for pursuing the implementation of the ASCA National Model, (b) benefits of implementation, (c) counseling program schools had in place, (d) time commitment, (e) the implementation experience, (f) implementation advocates, and (g) advice to peers. No studies were encountered in the literature examining the implementation of the ASCA National Model by high school principals in their schools,
highlighting the singular nature of this research. Contributions of the finding to existing literature are presented, implications, limitations and delimitations are explored, and suggestions for future research are provided.
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In everyone’s life, at some time, our inner fire goes out.

It is then burst into flame by an encounter with another human being. We should all be thankful for those people who rekindle the inner spirit.

~ Albert Schweitzer

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

In 2003, the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) publication, “The ASCA National Model: A Framework for School Counseling Programs,” redefined the profession of school counseling (ASCA National Model). The purpose of this model is “to create one vision and one voice for school counseling programs” (ASCA, 2003, p. 8). The ASCA National Model integrates the national standards for students and concentrates on the appropriate role of school counselors. It also provides the framework for the components of the school counseling program, defines the counselor’s role, and describes the operational structure of the model.

The ASCA National Model defines the components of a comprehensive school counseling program. As a vital component of the school’s academic mission, a comprehensive school counseling program advances the learning of all students, is data driven, and is supported by standards in the academic, career, and personal/social domains. Using the ASCA National Model when implementing a comprehensive school counseling program will answer the question, “How are students different as a result of what we do?” (ASCA, 2003, p. 9).

Since the end of the 19th century, the building principal has been viewed as the leader of the school. Baker (2001) noted that the building principal hires and directs on-the-job training of school counselors. Likewise, Chata and Loesch (2007) noted that the building principal generally selects, trains, and supervises the school counselor
working in the school. According to Dollarhide, Smith, and Lemberger (2007) the principal, in most schools, has “the power both to initiate and to stop change, determining the definition and direction of the school’s counseling program” (p. 360).

School counselors cannot implement the ASCA National Model without the support of the building principal. Investigating the implementation of the ASCA National Model by high school principals who successfully implemented the ASCA National Model in their schools is valuable because it aligns with what the ASCA espouses as the appropriate role of school counselors. Learning about the experiences of high school principals who implemented the ASCA National Model and understanding the impetus for implementation are essential for understanding the first steps toward implementing this model in schools. Information obtained from this study could also assist school counselors and principals desiring to implement the ASCA National Model in their schools.

The remainder of this chapter includes a review of the literature on topics significant to this study. The statement of the problem is described, followed by the purpose of the study, the research question, and operational definitions. This is followed by a review of the literature which covers subject matter including the history of school counseling: the early years; history of school counseling: the later years; the comprehensive school counseling program; the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) National Model; role of school counselors; leadership of principals; and role confusion for school counselors.
Statement of the Problem

Role confusion has been a concern for school counselors since the formation of the school counseling profession and continues to be an issue today (Amatea & Clark, 2005; Burnham & Jackson, 2000; Leuwerke, Walker, & Shi, 2009; McGlothlin & Miller 2008; Monteiro-Leitner, Asner-Self, Milde, Leitner, & Skelton, 2006; Ponec & Brock, 2000; Ribak-Rosenthal, 1994; Zalaquett, 2005). The noncounseling duties performed by school counselors have worried a number of researchers throughout the years (Baker, 1992; Bemak, 2000; Gysbers & Henderson, 2000; Kirchner & Setchfield, 2005; Schmidt, 2003). Murray (1995) asserted that school counselors

have become persons for all seasons . . . the actual duties and tasks of the position (as opposed to the printed job description) have multiplied and the guidance counselor seems to be involved with, or even in charge of, nearly every aspect of school operation. (p. 5)

In an effort to address the lack of understanding and the ever-changing role of school counselors, ASCA crafted a role statement that defined what services ought to be provided by school counselors (ASCA, 2003). The ASCA National Model states that the role of school counselors is to develop, coordinate, implement, and evaluate a comprehensive school counseling program that encourages the learning and achievement of all students. This program includes a deliberate and organized program delivery system that focuses on enhancing the academic, career, and personal/social success of all students.
ASCA (2003) stated that the purpose of the ASCA National Model “is to create one vision and one voice for school counseling programs” (p. 8). The ASCA National Model provides the framework for the components of the school counseling program, defines the counselor’s role, and describes the operational structure of the model. This model for school counseling programs helps school counselors identify what students should know and be able to do as a result of participating in a school counseling program (ASCA; Campbell & Dahir, 1997).

Brott and Myers (1999) stated,

In spite of the best efforts of professional associations, accrediting bodies, and training programs to define the profession of school counseling, studies cited in the literature indicate that the actual functions of counselors in the schools do not always reflect what have been identified as the best practices in school counseling. (p. 339)

An article by Perussé, Goodnough, Donegan, and Jones (2004) explained that the ASCA has determined the role of school counselors at the national level while school principals have been deciding the role of school counselors at the local level. Ribak-Rosenthal (1994) commented that when the building principal is instituting the role of school counselors, the principal often assigns inappropriate tasks to school counselors. Leuwerke et al. (2009) noted that principals frequently delegate clerical tasks to school counselors that are in conflict to the role definition of school counselors described in the ASCA National Model. The findings from the study conducted by Perussé et al. shows that more than 80% of the secondary school principals surveyed identified “registration
and scheduling” of students “administering cognitive, aptitude, and achievement tests; and maintaining students records” as appropriate tasks for school counselors (p. 157).

Therefore, investigating the implementation of the ASCA National Model by high school principals in their schools is worthy because it aligns with what the ASCA espouses as the appropriate role of school counselors. Learning about the experiences of high school principals who implemented the ASCA National Model and understanding the impetus for implementation are essential for understanding the first steps towards implementing this model in schools.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the implementation of the ASCA National Model by high school principals in their schools. No published research was found that focused on the implementation of the ASCA National Model by high school principals in their schools. It is the goal of this study to give voice to the experiences of high school principals who successfully implemented the ASCA National Model in their schools. Investigating the experience of high school principals who successfully implemented the ASCA National Model in their schools and understanding the impetus for implementation could assist school counselors and principals desiring to implement the ASCA National Model in their schools. The findings of this research study will add to the body of literature on the implementation of the ASCA National Model in schools and ascertain new information about the role of principals in implementing the ASCA National Model in high schools.
Research Questions

The following questions guide this inquiry:

1. What was the experience of high school principals who successfully implemented the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) National Model: A Framework for School Counseling Programs in their schools?

2. What was the impetus for high school principals to implement the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) National Model: A Framework for School Counseling Programs in their schools?

Operational Definitions

The following terms are defined since they are significant to this study:

comprehensive school counseling program, principal, school counselor, and Recognized ASCA National Model Program (RAMP).

Comprehensive School Counseling Program

A comprehensive school counseling program is data driven and is supported by standards in the academic, career, and personal/social domains (ASCA, 2003). A comprehensive school counseling program promotes normal development and addresses issues and problems that have arisen in the lives of students (Brown & Trusty, 2005). It should be “comprehensive in scope, preventive in design and developmental in nature” and is intended to benefit each student (ASCA, 2003, p. 13).

Principal

A principal is the administrator in the school building who supervises curriculum and instruction, selects and evaluates personnel, prepares and conducts budget activities,
and enacts appropriate legal practices regarding student discipline. In addition, administrators tend to the nuts and bolts of scheduling, school plant maintenance, buses, textbooks and extracurricular activities (Kaplan, 1995, p. 261).

**School Counselor**

School counselors are taught and trained in knowledge and aptitude that underscore counseling, consultation, coordination, and referrals skills (Coy, 1999). School counselors who attend a graduate program accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Education Programs (CACREP) are required to attend a minimum of 48 semester credit hours or 72 quarter credit hours taking classes in the 8 core areas. These areas are: (a) Human Growth and Development, (b) Social and Cultural Foundations, (c) Helping Relationships, (d) Group Work, (e) Lifestyle and Career Development, (f) Appraisal, (g) Research and Development, and (h) Professional Orientation (CACREP, 2009).

**Recognized ASCA Model Program (RAMP)**

RAMP is an award given to schools when their school counseling program is aligned with the standards outlined in the ASCA National Model. Schools can apply to the American School Counselor Association to receive this designation by collecting the appropriate data and information needed to fulfill the RAMP application requirements. RAMP award recipients are model schools devoted to developing and implementing a comprehensive school counseling program focused on the academic, career, and personal/social development of each student (www.schoolcounselor.org).
Review of the Literature

This chapter presents a review of the literature relevant to this study. It begins with the history of school counseling: the early years, the later years, the comprehensive school counseling program, the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) National Model, role of school counselors, leadership of principals, and role confusion for school counselors.

History of School Counseling: The Early Years

The profession of school counseling began in the United States as a vocational guidance movement in the late 1800s (Beesley, 2004; Gysbers & Henderson, 1997, 2001; Herr, 2001; Paisley & Borders, 1995) due to the negative result of the Industrial Revolution (Schmidt, 2003). Schmidt posited that, “slums, ethnic ghettos, and apparent neglect of individual rights and integrity” were the damaging consequence of the remarkable industrial growth (p. 6). These circumstances provided the impetus for the pioneers of the vocational guidance movement to accelerate the employment of a broader curriculum in schools (Herr, 2001).

In 1889, Jessie B. Davis, a principal at a school in Michigan, originated the first school guidance program in the United States (Coy, 1999). He encouraged teachers who taught English to incorporate guidance education in their classrooms. Jessie B. Davis put into operation a vocational guidance program utilizing the curriculum used by English teachers (Bauman et al., 2003). This effort was intended to cultivate students’ temperament by relating career interests to the subject matter being taught, by focusing on character development and positive behavior of all students (Schmidt, 2003).
George Merrill in 1895 implemented a vocational guidance curriculum at the California School of Mechanical Arts in San Francisco, which provided students with the opportunity to engage in job-related activities (Schmidt, 2003, p. 6). The purpose of the vocational guidance curriculum was to better prepare students for the world of work and to assist them in identifying an appropriate vocation and finding meaning in their education and occupation (Lambie & Williamson, 2004). Schmidt stated that students who took part in this program received “counseling, job placement and follow-up services” (p. 7).

Frank Parsons is often credited as being the founder of the vocational guidance movement and is referred to as the “Father of Guidance” (Schmidt, 2003, p. 7). According to Gysbers and Henderson (2000), Frank Parsons’ focus was on placing young men into suitable vocations based on their aptitudes, abilities, limitations, and the job requirements. Lambie and Williamson (2004) explained that the tasks Frank Parsons performed were the responsibility of vocational guidance counselors in the 1900s and are similar to the duties of today’s career counselors.

In January 1908, Mrs. Quincy Agassiz Shaw established the Boston Vocation Bureau, which is regarded as the initial organized construction of a vocational bureau in the United States (Gysbers & Henderson, 2000). The blueprint for the Boston Vocation Bureau was based on Frank Parsons’ work. A report about the Bureau issued by Parsons in May of 1908 is important because: (a) it is believed that the term vocational guidance emerged in print for the first time, (b) vocational guidance came forward as the name of a structured program, (c) it emphasized the importance of using qualified professionals to
offer vocational guidance, and (d) it encouraged the development and implementation of vocational guidance by all public schools (Gysbers & Henderson, 2000).

The work completed by Frank Parsons and the Vocational Bureau was acknowledged throughout the United States (Gysbers & Henderson, 2000). In 1910, the First National Conference on Vocational Guidance was held in Boston, and in 1912, a comparable conference was held in New York. In 1913, the creation of the National Vocational Guidance Association took place in Grand Rapids (Gysbers & Henderson, 2000).

Gysbers (2001) suggested that the initial growth in the guidance movement was supplemented by the creation of the National Vocational Guidance Association (NVGA) in 1913. The NVGA

merged with the American College Personnel Association, the National Association of Guidance, Supervisors and Counselor Trainers, and the Student Personnel Association for Teacher Education, becoming the American Personnel and Guidance Association (APGA), which is today the American Counseling Association (ACA). (p. 2)

The formation of the NVGA was influential because it integrated the counseling profession as we know it today (Schmidt, 2003).

The efforts of Frank Parsons and other pioneers created the momentum for the growth of the school counseling profession (Schmidt, 2003). Schmidt further stated that after the vocational guidance movement of the 1900s, World War I was the next occurrence that had an effect on the evolving school counseling profession.
**World War I.** During World War I, the United States military started to use group measurement procedures to determine the eligibility of recruits and used similar techniques to categorize them (Schmidt, 2003). Schmidt noted that the United States military’s intelligence testing influenced the use of group measurement procedures. He stated that the United States military adapted the work of Alfred Binet, Lewis Terman, and Arthur Otis. For example, the intelligence test created by Arthur Otis became the foundation for the military use of the Army Alpha and Beta Examination. The Army Alpha assessment was a pencil and paper exam, and the Army Beta test was a performance-based test.

**Progressive education.** Gysbers (2001) indicated that in the 1920s the purpose of the guidance movement shifted. Less emphasis was placed on social and industrial concerns and more emphasis was placed on personal, academic, and the overall mental health of students (Gysbers, 2001). During this time, John Dewey introduced progressive education in the schools (Schmidt, 2003). Progressive education emphasized the role of school counselors in guiding students in their personal, moral, and social development. Due to the introduction of the progressive education movement, schools started to implement guidance activities that were intended to facilitate a student’s growth in the above mentioned areas (Gysbers, 2001).

Parents and teachers expressed disapproval of the progressive education program because they felt that the areas covered in the guidance curriculum should be addressed in family and church settings (Schmidt, 2003). Schmidt suggested that teachers and parents wanted school programs to focus on the rudiments of education. The disapproval of the
progressive education movement and the Great Depression had a negative impact on school funding and triggered the decline in support for guidance activities.

**Clinical model.** In the 1930s, a “clinical model of vocational guidance emerged and counseling became a primary concern” (Gysbers & Henderson, 2000, p. 8). Solving students’ psychological and individual concerns was the primary focus of vocational guidance. Guidance services started to focus on counseling students, addressing students’ academic and behavioral concerns, working with organizations in the community and modifying students’ class schedules (Gysbers & Henderson, 2000). The emphasis on “social, moral, religious, ethical or political problems” was decreased (p. 9). The language used previously also changed. Terminologies such as “counseling, testing, information, placement, and follow-up” were now utilized to describe guidance service (p. 10).

**Events that affected school counselors.** The following events in the 1940s had a tremendous effect on school counseling: (a) the popularity of Roger’s Client-Centered approach to counseling, (b) the effect of World War II, and (c) after World War II, the government involvement in the profession of counseling and education (Lambie & Williamson, 2004; Schmidt, 2003).

Carl Roger published *Counseling and Psychotherapy* in 1942, which influenced guidance services in schools (Gysbers & Henderson, 2000). As a result of this publication, society became interested in the psychotherapeutic process, which surpassed their interest in psychometrics (Gysbers & Henderson, 2000). Roger’s attention to the client-counselor relationship encouraged counselors to move away from the
problem-focused approach and work towards emphasizing the therapeutic relationship (Schmidt, 2003). Schmidt asserted that some authors believe that Roger’s client-centered approach may have had a negative effect on the profession of school counseling. This approach may have contributed to the inept training of school counselors by overlooking the developmental and preventive interventions needed in the schools (Schmidt, 2003).

During World War II, the United States government asked counselors and psychologists for help in selecting and training military and manufacturing recruits (Schmidt, 2003). This request provided the momentum for the funding and training of counselors and psychologists. As a result, the term “counseling psychologist” was coined (Schmidt, 2003, p. 11).

The George-Barden Act of 1946 offered funding for the enhancement and maintenance of guidance and counseling activities in the schools and ancillary settings (Schmidt, 2003). Due to this act, guidance counselors began to receive funding. This act explicitly provided financial support for vocational guidance counseling programs (Gysbers & Henderson, 2000). Gysbers and Henderson stated that the U.S. Commissioner of Education ruled that federal funds could be used for the following four purposes:

1. The maintenance of a state program of supervision
2. Reimbursement of salaries of counselor-trainers
3. Research in the field of guidance; and
4. Reimbursement of salaries of local guidance supervisor and counselors (p. 13).
As a result of this ruling, fiscal and general resources, and management support from the government became available at the local and state level (Gysbers & Henderson, 2000). Another outcome of this ruling was the swift implementation of guidance and counseling programs in the schools and new locales (Schmidt, 2003).

During the 1950s, the Guidance and Personnel Branch of the U.S Office of Education was restructured at the federal level (Gysbers & Henderson, 2000). According to Schmidt (2003), the Guidance and Personnel branch was split up and from 1953 until 1954, “a Pupil Personnel Services Section operated in the Division of State and Local School Systems. In 1955, a “Guidance and Personnel Services Section was reestablished” (p. 11). The establishment of this department shifted the focus of the profession from its vocational roots to encompass a larger student services focus (Schmidt, 2003). Schmidt posited that this approach persisted in the 1950s and 1960s.

**Sputnik.** In 1957, the Soviet Union launched Sputnik and one of the ways in which Congress responded was by passing the National Defense Education Act (NDEA; Baker, 2001; Beesley, 2004; Gysbers & Henderson, 2001; Lambie & Williamson, 2004; Paisley & Borders, 1995; Wittmer, 2000). Gysbers and Henderson (2000) stated that the guidance designation in this act was contained in Title V. In Title V, Part A, grants were provided to states as an incentive to “establish statewide testing programs” (p. 14). Part B of this act offered financial support to institutions so that they could educate and train individuals to become secondary school counselors (Gysbers & Henderson, 2000). They also stated the stipulation was augmented which supported guidance programs and school counselors in elementary and middle school settings.
Schmidt (2003) reported that due to Title V of the NDEA “full-time counselors increased 126 percent from 12,000 to 27,180, and the ratio of counselors to students dropped from 1:960 to 1:530” (p. 13). The government subsidized “over 400 counseling institutes” and in excess of “13,000 counselors trained” (p. 13). Funding and support for school counselors during this time period propelled the school counseling profession (Baker, 2001; Wittmer, 2000).

The overall intent of the NDEA was to recognize and support students with high aptitudes in the areas of mathematics and science (Beesley, 2004; Gysbers & Henderson, 2001; Lambie & Williamson, 2004; Paisley & Borders, 1995; Wittmer, 2000). A vital aspect of the NDEA was the identification of school counselors as the professionals who would facilitate student testing and identify students who were capable of entering institutions of higher education in the area of mathematics and science (Herr, 2001). The goal was for these students to become future technological innovators.

In the past, guidance and counseling in schools had been provided by teachers serving in the role of counselors (Baker, 2001; Wittmer, 2000). The NDEA of 1957 influenced the hiring of more full-time school counselors to provide guidance and counseling to students (Baker, 2001; Gysbers & Henderson, 2000; Wittmer, 2000).

**Pupil personnel services.** In the 1960s, Pupil Personnel Services became the ideal organizational structure in schools (Lambie & Williamson, 2004). Gysbers and Henderson (2000) noted, “The Council of Chief State School Officers (1960) stated that pupil personnel services included: guidance, health, psychological services, school social work, and attendance” (p. 15). Guidance and the position of school counselors were now
relocated under the pupil personnel services organizational structure by numerous school
districts and state departments of education. As a result of this reorganization, guidance
continued to be a part of all the services carried out by school counselors (Gysbers &
Henderson).

Gysbers and Henderson (2000) suggested that based on the sources being cited,
the amount of guidance services provided by school counselors varied. Generally, “there
were six, including orientation, individual inventory or appraisal, counseling,
information, placement and follow-up” (p. 16).

Schmidt (2003) reported that:

In the period following 1960, the role and functions of school counselors
emphasized in the professional literature included programmatic and process
functions. Programmatic functions emphasized strategies to develop
comprehensive programs of services, such as defining goals and objectives,
assessing students’ needs, aligning services with the school’s curriculum,
coordinating student services, and evaluating results. In addition, educational and
vocational planning, student placement, and referral systems frequently were
included in this category. Process functions described specific activities by which
counselors provided direct services to students, parents and teachers. These
functions included individual and group counseling, student assessment, parent
assistance, and consultation with teachers and parents. (p. 15)
Origins of the Comprehensive School Counseling Program

Schmidt (2003) reasoned that authors in the 1960s called attention to the “comprehensive guidance and counseling programs as essential aspects of the school curriculum” (p. 15). Brown and Trusty (2005) stated that Gysbers embarked “on designing comprehensive school counseling and guidance programs in 1969” (p. 2). They also affirmed that Gysbers and Moore in 1974 decided to call their model “the Comprehensive Guidance Program Model” (p. 5). Gysbers continued to use the name Comprehensive Guidance Program Model (CGPM) in later and current work he authored and co-authored (Gysbers & Henderson, 2000).

In the 1970s, progress was being made in several states regarding the development and implementation of a comprehensive guidance program in schools (Gysbers & Henderson, 2000). Gysbers and Henderson reported that in 1971 the University of Missouri-Columbia received funding from the U.S. Office of Education to aid all 50 states including Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia in developing and implementing “career guidance, counseling, and placement programs in local schools” (p. 21). Scarborough and Luke (2008) asserted that the goal of this initiative was to develop and implement a comprehensive guidance program in all schools.

Gysbers, Lapan, and Jones (2000) affirmed that the underlying principle to develop and implement guidance and counseling programs in schools was due to guidance and counseling services becoming a secondary function performed by school counselors. School counselors were engaging in administrative duties that served a small group of students and were not conducting the duties that are the nucleus of the school
counselor’s role (Brown & Trusty, 2005; Burnham & Jackson, 2000). Lapan, Gysbers, and Petroski (2003) emphasized that “comprehensive guidance and counseling programs have provided school counselors K-12 with the organizational structure to focus efforts, organize work schedule, and allocate time necessary for implementing proactive school counseling activities and services that promote critical aspects of student development” (p. 196). The general intent of the comprehensive guidance and counseling program was for school counselors to offer services that are deemed beneficial to all students.

**History of School Counseling: The Later Years**

**A Nation at Risk.** In 1983, the National Commission on Excellence in Education published *A Nation at Risk* (U.S. Department of Education, 1983). This report documented specific problems in U.S. schools received by the commission through testimony from school board members, teachers, parents, high school and college students, leaders of industries and minority groups (U.S. Department of Education, 1983). These problems were:

1. International comparisons of student achievement, completed a decade ago, reveal that on 19 academic tests American students are never first or second and, in comparison with other industrialized nations, are last seven times.
2. Some 23 million American adults are functionally illiterate by the simplest tests of everyday reading, writing, and comprehension.
3. About 13 percent of all 17-year-olds in the United States can be considered functionally illiterate. Functional illiteracy among minority youth may run as high as 40 percent.
4. Average achievement of high school students on most standardized tests is now lower than 26 years ago when Sputnik was launched.

5. Over half of gifted students do not match their tested ability with comparable achievement in school.

6. The College Board’s Scholastic Aptitude Tests (SAT) demonstrates a virtually unbroken decline from 1963 to 1980. Average verbal scores fell over 50 points and average mathematics scores dropped nearly 40 points.

7. College Board achievement tests also reveal consistent declines in recent years in such subjects as physics and English.

8. Both the number and proportion of students demonstrating superior achievement on the SATs (i.e., those with scores of 650 or higher) have also dramatically declined.

9. Many 17-year-olds do not possess the “higher order” intellectual skills we should expect of them. Nearly 40 percent cannot draw inferences from written material; only one-fifth can write a persuasive essay; and only one-third can solve a mathematics problem requiring several steps.

10. There was a steady decline in science achievement scores of U.S. 17-year-olds as measured by national assessments of science in 1969, 1973, and 1977.

11. Between 1975 and 1980, remedial mathematics courses in public 4-year colleges increased by 72 percent and now constitute one-quarter of all mathematics courses taught in those institutions.
12. Average tested achievement of students graduating from college is also lower.

(p. 10)

Based on the data obtained from this investigation, Jones (2009) posited that the task force provided recommendations, such as: (a) improving teacher training programs, (b) toughening of student academic programs, and (c) utilizing school management procedures for improving U.S. schools.

Hohenshil (1987) stated that the National Commission on Excellence in Education investigated and reported on problems in U.S. schools and training of teachers but they did not mention school counselors and the role of school counselors in schools. According to Parr (1993), counselors can assist in the school restructuring process by:

1. Leading a support group for teachers who wish to share their concerns about the teacher appraisals, the career ladder, and any other aspect of the workplace that may be causing tension, worry, or frustration.

2. Serving on curriculum committees that define local goals to ensure that the socio-affective domain is included in the school’s educational blueprint.

3. Offering assistance to teachers on ways to approach underachievers to enhance their motivation and to use their natural learning styles.

4. Providing special programs for students who may need to improve their study skills.

5. Designing specific programs for students who may be even more at risk of dropping out of school because of increased standards and greater academic rigor.
6. Consulting with administrators at the local and district levels to help formulate ways that collegiality can be promoted.

7. Assisting individual teachers who may wish to find ways to improve their classroom instruction so the teacher appraisals will be anticipated with less apprehension and more self-confidence.

8. Assisting teachers and principals to design behavior management plans that address discipline problems.

9. Being politically informed and involved to ensure that the unique input that counselors can offer will be considered in future legislation on education. (p. 3)

The transforming school counseling initiative (TSCI). In 1996, the De Witt Wallace Fund and the Education Trust collaborated to develop a national initiative for improving school counseling by drawing attention to graduate level training programs of school counselors (P. J. Martin, 2002; Paisley & Hayes, 2003). This initiative made available information that they obtained from a 14-month national assessment that included interviews with school counselors, counselor educators, principals, and school counseling graduate students (P. J. Martin, 2002; Sears, 1999). They found that school counselors “could do more” by eliminating obstacles that impede student achievement and by closing the achievement gap of low income students and students of color (Sears, 1999, p. 47). Based on this information, TSCI selected six universities that would work with their local school districts and change their school counseling program to include criteria approved by the TSCI (P. J. Martin, 2002; Paisley & Hayes, 2003; Sears, 1999).
These graduate level school counseling training programs began focusing on elements that would assist school counselors in closing the achievement gap of low income and minority students (P. J. Martin, 2002; Sears, 1999).

**No Child Left Behind Act.** On January 8, 2002, President George W. Bush signed into law the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) which reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965. The ESEA provided guidance and funding to K-12 schools. The principle rationale of NCLB is to close the achievement gap between at-risk and minority students and their peers in the elementary and secondary school settings (U.S. Department of Education, 2001). “Improving achievement of disadvantaged students, recruitment and training of teachers and principals, language instruction for limited English proficient students, funding for federally impacted areas, reading first and literacy programs, and dropout prevention are among the issues addressed in the legislation” (Jones, 2009, p. 2). This legislation was intended to hold schools responsible for their students’ education and to make sure that at-risk students were not academically left behind (Dahir & Stone, 2003).

As a result, accountability in the form of testing has impacted the role of teachers and school counselors (Baker, 2001). Accountability necessitates the need for school counselors to work together with school personnel to improve student achievement (Dahir & Stone, 2003). Schools that are incapable of illustrating accountability in the areas of: (a) enhancing student achievement, (b) lessening the achievement gap, (c) decreasing truancy, (d) increasing graduation rates, and (e) providing adequate safety in the school, receive a sanction (McGannon, Carey, & Dimmitt, 2005).
Student improvement and accomplishment is published in the annual state and school district report card (Dahir & Stone, 2003). This document informs parents and community members of the school and state progress. Schools that do not make progress must provide additional services, such as free tutoring or after school instructive programs to students (U.S. Department of Education, 2001).

The American School Counselor Association’s National Standards for School Counseling Programs (Dahir, Sheldon, & Valiga, 1998) and the American School Counselor Association’s (ASCA) National Model: A Framework for School Counseling Programs (ASCA, 2003) highlight the value of school counselors delivering an accountable school counseling program. The ASCA National Model is designed to assist school counselors with creating a comprehensive school counseling program that supports the school mission and academic achievement of all students (Dahir & Stone, 2012). This model addresses the importance of school counseling programs by demonstrating how students are different as a result of the program (ASCA, 2003).

Accountability provides school counselors the opportunity to show how they can determine and resolve issues that hinder student achievement (Dahir & Stone, 2003). School counselors can align the goals of NCLB with their school counseling program by delivering the content of the school counseling program in a comprehensive and accountable manner that will promote the academic accomplishment of all students (Dahir & Stone, 2003; McGannon et al., 2005).
The Comprehensive School Counseling Program

The four program components of a comprehensive guidance program describe the functions and tasks to be carried out by the school counselor when implementing a guidance program (Brown & Trusty, 2005; Gysbers & Henderson, 2001; Paisley, 2001; Sink & MacDonald, 1998). These four components are: (a) guidance curriculum, (b) individual planning, (c) responsive services, and (d) system support (Gysbers & Henderson, 2001).

The guidance curriculum should consist of material that every student ought to learn in an organized and chronological way (Gysbers & Henderson, 2000). This curriculum must be composed of lessons to help each student reach the intended competencies. There is an obligation to offer all students the information and knowledge that is appropriate for their developmental level.

The guidance curriculum incorporates developmental activities that are infused throughout the school curriculum and can be facilitated by the school counselor, teachers and administrators (Brown & Trusty, 2005; Gysbers & Henderson, 2000). These activities focus on prevention and can be provided as classroom or school-wide activities. The intent of the guidance curriculum is to disseminate information to students so that they can develop skills to be used to tackle developmental concerns.

Individual planning is the second component of the guidance program where school counselors assist students by providing ongoing activities to aid them in creating and evaluating their short-term educational and long-term career goals (Brown & Trusty, 2005; Gysbers & Henderson, 2000). When taking part in these activities, students realize
their aspirations, values, capabilities, and interests. Developing, exploring, and evaluating a student’s educational and occupational goals are done in concert with his or her parents (Gysbers & Henderson, 2000).

Appraisal, advisement, and placement are a few of the ways individual planning is implemented (Gysbers & Henderson, 2000). When using the appraisal strategy, school counselors are helping students recognize and evaluate their interests, capabilities, talents, and accomplishments. Using the advisement approach, school counselors are demonstrating to students how to use the material they obtained from self-evaluation and career outlook data in planning their personal and professional goals (Gysbers & Henderson, 2000). Assisting students in making the transition from school to work or pursuing higher education and training is done using the placement strategy. The information obtained from these three strategies helps students in developing their immediate educational and ongoing career goals.

The third component of the comprehensive guidance program is responsive services (Brown & Trusty, 2005; Gysbers & Henderson, 2000). In this component, counselors work with students who lack the coping skills to effectively handle common developmental problems, as well as more serious problems such as parental divorce, substance abuse, and sexual identity (Gysbers & Henderson, 2000). Gysbers and Henderson stated that even though school counselors received the training and have the expertise to address students’ needs and problems, it is important for them to seek assistance and cooperation from teachers, administrators, parents, and community agencies.
Consultation, personal counseling, and referral strategies are employed in the responsive services component (Brown & Trusty, 2005; Gysbers & Henderson, 2000). In this component, school counselors work with students who have similar problems individually or in a small group setting. They also consult with teachers, administrators, and parents. In addition, they may refer students to community agencies for more long-term services (Gysbers & Henderson, 2000).

The final component of the comprehensive guidance program is system support (Brown & Trusty, 2005; Gysbers & Henderson, 2000). In this module, school counselors do not spend as much time working directly with students (Gysbers & Henderson, 2000). Their focus is on: (a) research and professional development, (b) program management, (c) public relations, (d) community outreach, and (e) serving on advisory boards (Gysbers & Henderson, 2000).

School counselors conduct program evaluation and follow-up studies, and use the data obtained to update and implement new guidance curriculum activities (Gysbers & Henderson, 2000). School counselors also regularly attend professional conferences and meetings, enroll in post graduate courses, and author professional articles. All of these activities provide the school counselor with knowledge about how to plan, manage, and support the activities of the comprehensive guidance program (Gysbers & Henderson, 2000).

In the system support component, school counselors also update teachers, administrators, students, parents, and the community about the comprehensive guidance and counseling program (Gysbers & Henderson, 2000). This can be done by conducting
presentations at local businesses, industries, community agencies, and by serving on different advisory boards (Gysbers & Henderson, 2000). By becoming involved in the community, school counselors build rapport with community members, have different opportunities to educate others about the school guidance program and gain knowledge about employment opportunities and other resources available in the community for students (Gysbers & Henderson, 2000).

Implementing the comprehensive school counseling program. Gysbers (2006) stated that “strong leadership at the state level is a key to developing effective and accountable comprehensive guidance and counseling programs at the local level” (p. 247). Gysbers continued that “personnel in colleges and universities, professional associations, and school counselors can and do influence practice” (p. 247). The idea to put into practice a comprehensive guidance program in schools can come from anyone including: school counselors, administrators, teachers, parents, students, and the school board (Gysbers & Henderson, 2000). Regardless of who put forth the idea for change, school counselors, school administrators, teachers, and the school board must be involved in the decision to implement a comprehensive guidance program in the school (Gysbers & Henderson, 2000; Schmidt, 2003).

A set of criteria that should be met before implementing a comprehensive school counseling program was established by Mitchell and Gysbers (1978) and cited in Gysbers and Henderson (2000). This set of criteria is listed below:

1. All staff members are involved.
2. All staff members are committed to the common objective: total, integrated
development of individual students.

3. The administration is committed to the comprehensive approach and is willing
to negotiate (trade off) helping staff members identify current activities that
do not contribute to priority outcomes and supporting staff members’
abandonment of such activities in favor of those that do contribute to priority
outcomes.

4. All staff members see the comprehensive systematic counseling and guidance
program as a function of the total staff rather than the exclusive responsibility
of the counselors.

5. Counselors are willing to give up such “security blankets” as writing lengthy
reports of their contacts with counselees or seeing counselees individually on
matters better addressed in a group.

6. Counselors are interested in acquiring competencies.

7. Staff development activities to help staff members acquire competencies
needed for successful implementation of a comprehensive program are
provided.

8. Time is made available for planning and designing the program and the
evaluation, with all interested groups participating (students, parents, teachers,
counselors, administrators, and community).
9. Program developers design an incremental transition rather than an abrupt transition that ignores the need for continuing many current activities and trusts.

10. Abrupt change is difficult and anxiety-producing; it tends to cause participants in the change to build barriers against it. (p. 36)

Schmidt (2003) suggested that the following steps should be taken when developing a plan to implement a comprehensive school counseling program: (a) identifying the needs of students, parents, teachers, administrators, school board, and the community; (b) soliciting ideas and including individuals in the change process; (c) establishing an advisory committee; (d) promoting the comprehensive school counseling program; (e) implementing the comprehensive school counseling program; and (f) evaluating the comprehensive school counseling program.

In an attempt to serve students, parents, teachers, administrators, the school board, and the community effectively, it is imperative that school counselors conduct a needs assessment. A needs assessment is an important part of a comprehensive school counseling program (Erford, 2009; Gysbers & Henderson, 2000; Schmidt, 2003). Its purpose is three fold: first, it is used to appraise the current program and evaluate the future needs of the program’s stakeholders. Second, it is employed to evaluate current goals and to ensure the continuous refinement of these goals. Third, it is utilized in the development of new goals and objectives (Erford, 2009).

A needs assessment can be conducted through a variety of methods such as: (a) questionnaires and inventories, (b) analysis of records, (c) personal interviews, (d)
counseling statistics, (e) classroom visits, (f) use of outside consultants, and (g) the systematic evaluation of the counseling program (Erford, 2009; Gysbers, 2001). Needs assessments are typically conducted with individuals who are identified as the primary stakeholders in the school and community. The data obtained from the needs assessment should be analyzed and used to establish the goals and objectives to be integrated in the comprehensive school counseling program (Dimmitt, 2009; Schmidt, 2003).

When implementing a comprehensive school counseling program, it is vital that this undertaking not be done exclusively by the school counselor. Campbell and Dahir (1997) noted that “the school counselor is not the counseling program. The school counselor and the school counseling program use a collaborative model as their foundation” (p. 9). Employing a collaborative approach is essential (Schmidt, 2003); therefore, it is important for the school counselor to include various individuals in the planning process.

The primary individual to include in the planning process is the building principal (Schmidt, 2003; Trevisan, 2001). Ponec and Brock (2000) stated that overlooking the authority of the principal could negatively impact the development of a comprehensive school counseling program. Zalequett (2005) indicated that for implementation of a comprehensive school counseling to succeed, it is vital that the principal and school counselor work as a team.

Baker (2001) noted that principals often make the final decision regarding the hiring of school counselors and guiding their on-the-job training. Similarly, Chata and Loesch (2007) emphasized that the building principal generally selects, trains, and
supervises the school counselor. Fitch, Newby, Ballestero, and Marshall (2001) reported that in the majority of schools, the principal typically determines the role of school counselors. Dollarhide et al. (2007) asserted that “in most schools” the principal has “the power both to initiate and to stop change, determining the definition and direction of the school’s counseling program” (p. 360). Therefore, establishing a supportive working relationship with the principal is essential in developing and implementing a comprehensive school-counseling program (Beale, 1995; Gysbers & Henderson, 2000; Ribak-Rosenthal, 1994; Schmidt, 2003; Trevisan, 2001).

An awareness of how the principal perceives the role of school counselors and school counseling programs is important. This knowledge will allow the school counselor to decide whether the building principal may be agreeable to the implementation of a comprehensive school counseling program. The agreement and partnership between the school counselor and building principal to implement a comprehensive school counseling program can influence other stakeholders (Dahir & Stone, 2003). Since change can be difficult, this leadership is paramount when working with students, teachers, parents, school board members, and the community (Aluede, Imonikhe, & Afen-Akpai, 2007).

Gysbers and Henderson (2000) posited that the exchange of ideas, the processing of thoughts, reactions, and disagreement by a variety of people during this planning phase is critical. This course of action will afford individuals the opportunity to ask questions, offer insight, and provide feedback. During this phase, it is critical that each person feel that his or her input is important and will be considered (Gysbers & Henderson, 2000).
At this stage, it is necessary for the school counselor to educate building staff about the justification and objective for the change (Gysbers & Henderson, 2000). Articulating plainly and ascertaining that each staff member has an understanding of the change, how the change will affect them, and how to respond to the change is of the essence in order to implement successfully a comprehensive school counseling program. By executing these steps, the school counselor is more likely to receive the support needed in order to implement a comprehensive school counseling program.

An advisory committee is made up of a group of volunteers such as parents, community members, students, administrators, and teachers (Brooks-McNamara & Pedersen, 2006; Gysbers & Henderson, 2000; Johnson, Johnson, & Downs, 2006; Schmidt, 2003). The advisory committee is created to assist in the enhancement of the school counseling program. It offers an opportunity for communication “between schools and community and the perspective of community and parental expectations for the counseling program” (Dahir & Stone, 2012, p. 196). School counselors solicit the help of this group in supporting, advising, and advocating for the development of school wide programs that will improve student learning, increase rapport among building staff and build a positive school atmosphere (Gysbers & Henderson, 2000; Schmidt, 2003). This group also provides school counselors with input on the development, implementation, evaluation, maintenance and revision of the comprehensive school counseling program (Gysbers & Henderson, 2000; Schmidt, 2003).

One way of promoting the comprehensive school counseling program is by putting into action a public relations lobbying group (Gysbers & Henderson, 2000;
Johnson et al., 2006; Schmidt, 2003). This public relations group should include school counselors, members from the advisory committee, and leaders in the community (Gysbers & Henderson, 2000; Johnson et al., 2006; Schmidt, 2003). The purpose of promoting the comprehensive school counseling program is two-fold (Schmidt, 2003). The first goal is to inform students, parents, teachers, school board members, and the community about the benefits of having a comprehensive school counseling program. The second goal is to have school counselors visible and active in the school and community endorsing the comprehensive school counseling program (Schmidt, 2003).

Dahir and Stone (2012) listed the benefits of implementing a comprehensive school counseling program. Benefits for school counselors:

- Clarify responsibilities within the context of a school counseling program.
- Eliminate nonschool counseling program activities.
- Ensure that every student has access to developmental and comprehensive school counseling programs.
- Offer the process to design, deliver, and manage an accountable school counseling program.
- Demonstrate the school counselor’s role as a leader, advocate, team player, data informed practitioner, and collaborator in the school setting.
- Align the school counseling program’s contributions with the academic mission of the school. (p. 20)

Benefits for students:
- Understand that they are participating in programs for both career and college readiness.
- Participate in proactive strategies and responsive interventions to minimize and eliminate educational barriers.
- Engage in targeted interventions aimed at closing the gap.
- Acquire attitudes, knowledge, and skills in the three counseling domains: academic, personal/social, and career as a result of participating in a school counseling program.
- Participate in a rigorous academic curriculum.
- Have equitable access to all educational opportunities. (p. 21)

Benefits for parents:

- Acquire knowledge about their children’s academic, career, and personal/social development.
- Partnership with school counselors regarding their children’s learning and career goals.
- Participate in educational and informational sessions.
- Participate in ongoing communication between parent, teacher, administrators, and school counselor.
- Increase access to school and community resources.
- Gain the necessary support to help their children successfully transition from grade level to grade level.
• Receive information and assistance with the post-secondary planning process.

(p. 21)

Benefits for community members:

• Offer opportunities for all community stakeholders to actively participate in the development and implementation of the school counseling program.

• Assist with the school’s access to community resources.

• Connect with school stakeholders and students who affect community well being and workforce.

• Promote collaboration and teaming to encourage citizenship, high achievement, and community pride.

• Encourage students to take pride in their community.

• Demonstrate the role the community plays in a student’s education.

• Show community support, commitment to, and involvement in school improvement.  (p. 23)

There are several ways to market the program.  One way is to have members from the public relations group speak about the advantages of having a comprehensive school counseling program.  This can be done by sponsoring informational sessions and conducting presentations in classrooms, at in-service workshops, community events, school board, departmental and PTA meetings (Johnson et al., 2006; Schmidt, 2003).

Brochures can also be used to promote the program (Johnson et al., 2006; Schmidt, 2003).  When using brochures, it is important for the brochures to contain a description of the school counselor’s role and services that are provided by the school
counselor to students, parents, teachers, administrator, school board and the community (Johnson et al., 2006; Schmidt, 2003). These brochures can be distributed at school board meetings, “PTO meetings, placed in orientation packets for new students, and made available in the counseling center” (Schmidt, 2003, p. 119). Brochures can also be distributed at any speaking engagement conducted by a member of the public relations group.

A third way is for school counselors to write a weekly or monthly column in the school and/or local newspaper educating individuals about the benefits of having a comprehensive school counseling program, the role of school counselors and the services provided by school counselors (Schmidt, 2003). This column can also be used to answer any questions individuals may have about the comprehensive school counseling program.

Developing a website which discusses the benefits of having a comprehensive school counseling program is another viable option (Schmidt, 2003). This website should contain all of the information mentioned above. It can also be used by members of the public relations group to answer questions posted on the website and to facilitate group discussion.

Implementation is the execution phase of the comprehensive school counseling program (Aluede et al., 2007). In this phase, the comprehensive school counseling program is put into operation. All stakeholders within the school system must be committed to its implementation. Most importantly, administrator support is essential in assuring the successful implementation of the comprehensive school counseling program (Schmidt, 2003). It is also vital for the Board of Education to endorse the comprehensive
school counseling program and provide the necessary resources and support (Gysbers & Henderson, 2000).

Historically, school counselors have felt obligated to show the effectiveness of the school counseling program (Green & Keys, 2001). Currently, school counselors are expected to demonstrate how the services they provide assist the school in attaining its educational mission (Eschenauer & Chen-Hayes, 2005; Schmidt, 2003; Stone & Dahir, 2004). Dahir and Stone (2012) noted that the ASCA National Model encourages “school counselors to use data to assess student outcomes. School counselors use school-based data to understand the current situation in their school building and district and work collaboratively toward the goals of school improvement” (p. 187). By using data school counselors can connect student achievement to the school counseling program (Dahir & Stone, 2012). ASCA (2005) described the use of data as an “accountable method to align the school counseling program with the school’s academic mission” (p. 16).

Dahir and Stone (2012) remarked that school counselors ought to be skilled in data collection, analysis, and interpretation. They suggested that school counselors examine student growth through three categories of data collection:

1. Student achievement data, which can include standardized test scores, GPA, graduation rate, promotion/retention rates, etc.
2. School improvement data, which can include course enrollment patterns, discipline referrals, suspension rates, attendance rates, parent/guardian involvement, participation in extracurricular activities, etc.
3. Student competency data, which can include percentage of students with a four-year plan, percentage of students participating in job shadowing, and percentage of students achieving the competencies as determined by the faculty. (pp. 196-197)

Using these categories of data can show students’ growth or lack of growth, which can establish goals for the school counseling program.

Program evaluation is part of the comprehensive school counseling program and is endorsed by ASCA (Aluede et al., 2007; Dahir & Stone, 2012; Gysbers & Henderson, 2000; Hughey & Gysbers, 1993; Schmidt, 2003) and has several purposes. Evaluation is conducted to discover if the goals and objectives are being met, weaknesses of the comprehensive school counseling program, and areas for future change (Aluede et al., 2007). School counselors evaluate the comprehensive school counseling program to ensure that what the program is offering is making a difference in the lives of all students (Dimmitt, 2009). Furthermore, the results of the evaluation illustrate the importance of the services provided by school counselors to students, parents, teachers, administrators, and the school board. It also justifies funding and resources for the comprehensive school counseling program (Dimmitt, 2009; Gysbers & Henderson, 2000; Schmidt, 2003). Dimmitt (2009) reported:

The U.S Department of Education (2001) states that evaluation is crucial in all educational efforts, and that it informs project activities and practices, justifies expenditure of funds, enhances administrative planning and policymaking, assures that project objectives have been met, provides evidence for program
achievements, monitors program implementation, notes unintended consequences, informs allocation of resources, and identifies problems and costs. (p. 1)

**Benefits of a comprehensive school counseling program.** Numerous counseling studies have provided evidence regarding the benefits of an implemented comprehensive school counseling program (Alude et al., 2007; Dahir & Stone, 2003; Fitch & Marshall, 2004; Gysbers & Lapan, 2001; Herr, 2001; Lapan et al., 2003; Lapan, Gysbers, & Sun, 1997; Scarborough & Luke, 2008; Sink, Akos, Turnbull, & Mvududu, 2008). In 1997, Lapan, Gysbers, and Sun published the results from a study they conducted where they surveyed 236 high schools students in Missouri who were attending schools that had implemented a comprehensive school counseling program. These students reported: (a) earning higher grades, (b) the belief that their education was better preparing them for their future, (c) that career and college information were available to them, (d) that the climate in their school was positive, (e) having a greater feeling of belonging and safety in their school, (f) their classes were less likely to be interrupted by other students, and (g) their peers behaved better in school.

In another study, Lapan et al. (2003) investigated the effects of a fully implemented comprehensive guidance and counseling program on 22,601 students attending 184 middle schools in Missouri. They reported the results for seventh-grade students in the following areas: (a) how safe they felt in school, (b) how satisfied they were with their education, (c) effect on their grades, (d) opinion regarding the relationship they had with their teachers, and (e) their view about the significance and worth of their education toward their future. The authors stated that students who
attended a fully implemented comprehensive guidance and counseling programs reported that: (a) they felt safer in school, (b) were satisfied with their education, (c) earned higher grades, (d) had a better relationship with their teachers, and (e) their education had significance and worth toward their future.

Sink and Stroh (2003) randomly selected 150 elementary schools representing in excess of 20,000 third and fourth grade students in Washington State. These students were enrolled in schools that had: (a) no comprehensive school counseling program, (b) schools with moderately implemented comprehensive school counseling program, and (c) schools with a fully implemented comprehensive school counseling program. Sink and Stroh reported the results of schools classified as having: (a) no comprehensive school counseling program, and (b) schools with a fully implemented comprehensive school counseling program. Results from the study indicated that students who were enrolled in school with a fully implemented comprehensive school counseling program performed significantly better on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) for third grade students and the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) for fourth grade students.

Nelson, Gardner, and Fox (1998) studied the Utah Comprehensive Counseling and Guidance Program. They reported that students who attended Utah schools that had a fully implemented Comprehensive Counseling and Guidance Program: (a) took more advanced mathematics and science courses, (b) took more technical courses, (c) obtained higher ACT scores in every area of the test, (d) rated their overall educational preparation as more adequate, (e) rated their job preparation as better, and (f) rated the guidance and career planning services in their school as being high.
The studies cited above illustrate that comprehensive counseling and guidance programs have a positive effect on the educational outcome of students.

**The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) National Model**

The ASCA National Model (2012) incorporated three program models: (a) Gysbers and Henderson (2000) comprehensive program model, (b) Myrick (2003b) developmental program model, and (c) Johnson and Johnson (2001) results-based approach program model. Dahir and Stone (2012) indicated that ASCA also integrated into the ASCA National Model the “themes of leadership, advocacy, collaboration, systemic change, and the use of data” which were important to the work of the Transformed School Counseling Initiative at the Education Trust (p. 187).

Hatch and Chen-Hayes (2008) asserted that ASCA developed the ASCA National Model in an attempt to enhance the accuracy of the school counseling profession. This action was due “to the increase in standards-based models of education,” reform and accountability in education, and the desire to promote and enhance learning for all students (p. 1). Jackson and White (2000) stated that the ASCA National Model supports a comprehensive and developmental approach to school counseling which emphasizes prevention and the promotion of healthy development for all students.

The ASCA (2012) stated that the purpose of the ASCA National Model “is to create one vision and one voice for school counseling programs” (p. 8). The ASCA National Model provides the framework for the components of the school counseling program, defines the counselor’s role, and describes the operational structure of the model. This model for school counseling programs helps school counselors identify what
students should know and be able to do as a result of participating in a school counseling program (ASCA, 2012; Campbell & Dahir, 1997). The authors also suggested that it is the recommended model for school counselors to use when designing, implementing, supervising, and evaluating their counseling program.

The ASCA developed the ASCA National Model in 2003, revised it in 2005, and revised it again in 2012. The ASCA National Model was written:

To reflect a comprehensive approach to program foundation, delivery, management, and accountability. The ASCA National Model provides the mechanism with which school counselors and school counseling teams will design, coordinate, implement, manage and evaluate their programs for students’ success. It provides a framework for the program components, the school counselor’s role in implementation, and the underlying philosophies of leadership, advocacy, and systemic change. (ASCA, 2005, p. 9)

The ASCA National Model consists of four components: (a) foundation, (b) delivery, (c) management, and (d) accountability systems. Additionally, this model incorporates four themes: (a) leadership, (b) advocacy, (c) collaboration, and (d) systemic change. (See Figure 1).

**Foundation.** The foundation presents the “what” of the program (ASCA, 2003, p. 22). It addresses what every student will know and be able to do as a result of participating in the program. The foundation component of the ASCA National Model includes the belief and philosophy that guides the program, and the mission or program purpose statement of the comprehensive school counseling program. It also has three
Figure 1. Operational structure and components of the ASCA’s National Model.

Reprinted with permission from ASCA (see Appendix A).

domains: (a) academic, (b) career, and (c) personal/social development, with each domain having three standards (ASCA, 2003; Dahir, 2001; Dahir & Stone, 2003; Dimmitt & Carey, 2007; Mason & Duba, 2009; Myrick, 2003a). (See Table 1).
Table 1

The ASCA Domains and Standards (ASCA, 2005)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domains</th>
<th>Standards</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic</td>
<td>Standard 1: Students will acquire the attitudes, knowledge, and skills that contribute to effective learning in school and across their life span.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Standard 2: Students will complete school with the academic preparation essential to choose from a wide range of substantial post-secondary options, including college.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Standard 3: Students will understand the relationship of academics to the world of work and to life at home and in the community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career</td>
<td>Standard 1: Students will acquire the skills to investigate the world of work in relation to knowledge of self and to make informed career decisions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Standard 2: Students will employ strategies to achieve future career success and satisfaction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Standard 3: Students will understand the relationship between personal qualities, education and training, and the world of work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal/social</td>
<td>Standard 1: Students will acquire the attitudes, knowledge and interpersonal skills to help them understand and respect self and others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Standard 2: Students will make decisions, set goals, and take necessary action to achieve goals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Standard 3: Students will understand safety and survival skills.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Delivery system.** The delivery system focuses on the “how” of the program (ASCA, 2003, p. 22). It is centered on the belief, philosophy, and the mission described in the foundation component of the ASCA National Model. The mission of the school counseling program will be carried out through four major components: (a) guidance curriculum, (b) individual planning, (c) responsive services, and (d) system support.

The guidance curriculum provides a medium for conveying structured lessons intended to aid students in achieving the desired competencies of the comprehensive school counseling program (ASCA, 2012; Myrick, 2003b). It offers all students the
knowledge and skills appropriate for their developmental level. The guidance curriculum is presented by school counselors and other professionals in a systematic way through the school’s K through 12 curriculums (ASCA, 2012; Myrick, 2003b). The ASCA asserted that this is carried out by direct and indirect service activities. Direct service activities include individual and group counseling; indirect service activities consist of consultation, team building, leadership, and advocacy action (ASCA, 2012).

Individual student planning involves school counselors working with students and their families in identifying and employing ongoing activities that assist students in academic, career, and personal/social development (ASCA, 2003). These activities are designed to aid students in recognizing and managing their personal goals. Activities typically take place on an individual basis or in a small group setting.

Responsive services focus on a student’s immediate and future needs (ASCA, 2003; Myrick, 2003b). Information can be conveyed through individual or group counseling (ASCA, 2003). Consultation with parents and teachers, and referral to school or community support programs are important features of responsive services.

Lastly, the ASCA noted that system support activities maintain and enhance the school counseling program. Activities used to ensure the school counseling program is successful are: (a) professional development, (b) consultation, (c) collaboration, (d) program management and operations.

Management system. The management system addresses the when, the why, and on what authority the program is being implemented (ASCA, 2003). According to
the ASCA, it includes the management agreement, an advisory council, and the use of
data, action plans, time, and calendars. The ASCA National Model reported that:

- The management agreement focuses on the yearly goals for the school
counseling program. It is developed by school counselors at the beginning of
the school year and approved by the school administration.

- The advisory council is made up of students, parents, teachers, school
counselors, and administrators. This council examines the school counseling
program data and makes recommendations.

- Data is used to demonstrate the success or weakness of the counseling
program. Activities are created and implemented based on the school
counseling program data.

- The guidance curriculum and closing-the-gap action plans describe how and
who will implement and evaluate the school counseling program. These two
action plans guarantee that a plan is in place to connect with each student and
evaluate how each student has benefited from the school counseling program.

- School counselors are encouraged to designate 80% of their time to work
directly with students.

- Calendars are used to keep students, parents or guardians, teachers and
administrators informed of all school counseling programs.

**Accountability.** The ASCA posits that the accountability system answers the
question: “How are students different as a result of the school counseling program?”
This question is answered by completing school audits and compiling results reports.

Themes. The four themes of leadership, advocacy, collaboration, and systemic change are incorporated as part of the framework of the ASCA National Model (ASCA, 2012). School counselors working in the roles of leader, advocate, and collaborator support students’ success by helping each student gain access to academic training that will lead to enhance academic achievement (ASCA, 2012). The combination of leadership, advocacy, and collaboration leads to systemic change.

The purpose of the ASCA National Model is “to create one vision and one voice for school counseling programs” (ASCA, 2012, p. 8). This model integrates the National Standards for students and concentrates on the appropriate role of school counselors. The ASCA National Model is a framework that school counselors are encouraged to use when designing, coordinating, implementing, managing, and evaluating their school counseling program. Using the ASCA National Model when implementing a comprehensive school counseling program will answer the question, “How are students different as a result of what we do?” (ASCA, 2012, p. 9).

Recognized ASCA Model Program (RAMP). In 2003, the ASCA developed the Recognized ASCA Model Programs (RAMP) award to honor school counseling programs that have fully implemented the ASCA National Model with demonstrated evidence of success for K-12 students (www.schoolcounselor.org). This three-year designation distinguishes school counseling programs that are delivering a comprehensive, data-driven school counseling program. School counseling programs
that have implemented the ASCA National Model can apply for the RAMP designation, and schools that have received this designation hold it for 3 years. They must then reapply for re-ramp status at the conclusion of each 3-year cycle.

The application process requires the submission of 12 application components on a CD including a narrative for the first 11 components. These components include: (a) statement of philosophy, (b) mission statement, (c) school counseling program goals, (d) competencies and indicators, (e) management agreement, (f) advisory council, (g) calendars, (h) classroom guidance curriculum: action plan and lessons, (i) classroom guidance curriculum: results report, (j) small-group responsive services, (k) closing-the-gap results report, and (l) program evaluation reflection (www.schoolcounselor.org). A five point scoring rubric is available for each component. RAMP status is awarded to applicants that receive a score of 54 points or higher out of a possible 60 points.

**Role of School Counselors**

The role and function of school counselors has been debated in the literature for many years (Amatea & Clark, 2005; Aubrey, 1977; Baker, 1992; Bemak, 2000; Burnham & Jackson, 2000; Chata & Loesch, 2007; Fitch & Marshall, 2004; Fitch et al., 2001; Herr, 2001; Kirchner & Setchfield, 2005; Leuwerke et al., 2009; Louis, Jones, & Barajas, 2001; Monteiro-Leitner et al., 2006; Reiner, Colbert, & Perussé, 2009; Remley & Albright, 1988; Zalaquett, 2005). Dahir (2004) stated that “the history of school counseling has depicted a profession in search of an identity” (p. 345) and Burnham and
Jackson (2000) reported that “the role of school counselors has been redefined and broadened through the years” (p. 2).

Muro and Kottman (1995) indicated that as early as 1966 the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES) and the ASCA had already begun specifying the appropriate role and function for school counselors. Likewise, Ribak-Rosenthal (1994) noted that several authors in the 1960s and 1970s published articles advocating for different roles for school counselors. He stated that some of these roles included school counselors becoming change agents, consultants, coordinators, crisis intervention specialists, and group leaders. Ribak-Rosenthal asserted that in spite of authors attempting to define the role of school counselors, role confusion still existed.

The result from Borders and Drury (1992) review of the literature confirmed the assertion by Ribak-Rosenthal and illuminated how uninformed principals, teachers, and parents are about the appropriate role of school counselors.

In an effort to address this lack of understanding and the ever-changing role of school counselors, the ASCA crafted a role statement that defined what services ought to be provided by school counselors (ASCA, 2012). The ASCA National Model (2012) stated that “professional school counselors deliver a comprehensive school counseling program encouraging all students’ academic, career, and personal/social development and help all students in maximizing student achievement” (p. 23).

The ASCA National Model also states that the role of school counselors is to develop, coordinate, implement, and evaluate a comprehensive school counseling program that encourages the learning and achievement of all students. This program
includes a deliberate and organized program delivery system that focuses on enhancing the academic, career, and personal/social success of all students.

Due to the lack of consistency from school to school, district to district, and state to state regarding the duties of school counselors and of the school counseling program, the ASCA created the ASCA National Model to delineate what a school counseling program is, the appropriate role of school counselors, and the importance of implementing a comprehensive school counseling program in schools. By implementing a school counseling program based on the ASCA National Model, schools and school districts can:

- Establish the school counseling program as an integral component of the academic mission of the school.
- Ensure every student has equitable access to the school counseling program.
- Identify and deliver the knowledge and skills all students should acquire.
- Ensure that the school counseling program is comprehensive in design and is delivered systematically to all students (Executive Summary).

Leadership of Principals

Rousmaniere (2007) asserted that early in the 19th century, the school organizational structure consisted of a superintendent, school board, and teachers. The superintendent dealt with “district operation from afar” and the local school board wielded power from the community (p. 7). Teachers instructed students and served as the building proprietors (Kafka, 2009; Rousmaniere, 2007).
During the mid-19th century, urban school districts grouped and divided students into different classrooms by their age and accomplishments (Rousmaniere, 2007). “A head teacher or teaching principal” was appointed to organize the school curriculum, serve as the disciplinarian, and supervise teachers (p. 7). Kafka (2009) reported that by the end of the 19th century the majority of schools in large cities viewed the principal as the leader of the school.

He gave orders, and enforced them. He directed, advised, and instructed teachers. He classified pupils, disciplined them, and enforced safeguards designed to protect their health and morals. He supervised and rated janitors. He requisitioned all educational, and frequently all maintenance supplies. Parents sought his advice, and respected his regulations. (Pierce, 1935, cited in Kafka, 2009, p. 321)

Since the end of the 19th century, the building principal has been viewed as the leader of the school. The principal supervises and guides staff employed in the school. The building principal hires and directs the on-the-job training of school counselors (Baker, 2001). Likewise, Chata and Loesch (2007) noted that the building principal generally selects, trains, and supervises the school counselor working in the school. In most schools, the principal has “the power both to initiate and to stop change, determining the definition and direction of the school’s counseling program” (Dollarhide et al., 2007, p. 360).

Principal leadership continues to be the key to school success and is vital to successful school restructuring (Leithwood, Seashore Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom,
Levine (2005) stated that “school principals are being called on to lead in the redesign of their schools and school systems” (p. 12). He went on to say that principals are expected to lead their schools in the “rethinking of goals, priorities, finances, staffing, and curriculum” (p. 12). Leithwood et al. (2004) also stated that “setting direction, developing people and redesigning the organization” is at the foundation of successful leadership (p. 8).

The National Policy Board for Educational Administration (2002) reported that “every educational reform report of the last decade concluded that the United States cannot have excellent schools without excellent leaders” (p. 2). Orr (2007) highlighted that school leadership “benefits the organization as a whole by fostering shared purposes and goals, school structure and networks and collaborative organizational culture” (Silins, Mulford, & Zarins, 2002, as cited in Orr, 2007, p. 2; also see Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999;).

The Wallace Foundation Report (2012) stated that effective principals engage in five tasks:

1. Shaping a vision of academic success for all students, one based on high standards.
2. Creating a climate hospitable to education in order that safety, a cooperative spirit, and other foundations of fruitful interaction prevail.
3. Cultivating leadership in others so that teachers and other adults assume their parts in realizing the school vision.
4. Improving instruction to enable teachers to teach at their best and students to learn at their utmost.
5. Managing people, data and processes to foster school improvement (p. 4).

Leithwood et al. (2004) discerned three practices that are at the core of leadership: (a) setting direction, (b) developing people, and (c) redesigning the organization. Setting direction entails the principal increasing the awareness and shared understanding among staff members about the school goals and activities. Gaining this understanding will help individuals recognize the schools “purpose or vision” and will assist them in making “sense of their work and enables them to find a sense of identity for themselves within their work context” (p. 8). Developing people involves the principal providing “intellectual stimulation,” “individualized support,” and “appropriate models of best practice and beliefs considered fundamental” to the school (p. 9). Principals redesign the organization by strengthening the school’s and district’s culture, “modifying organizational structures and building collaborative processes” (p. 25).

The Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) created a set of standards for school principals that present a common core of knowledge, dispositions, and performances. Standards 1 through 6 state that “a school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by:

1. Facilitating the development, articulation, implementation and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community.

2. Advocating, nurturing and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.

3. Ensuring management of the organization, operations and resources for a safe, efficient and effective learning environment.
4. Collaborating with families and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs and mobilizing community resources.

5. Acting with integrity, fairness and in an ethical manner.

6. Understanding, responding to and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal and cultural context” (ISLLC, 1996, pp. 10-20).

Maxwell (2007) stated in his book, *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*, that “trust is the foundation of leadership. To build trust, a leader must exemplify these qualities: competence, connection, and character” (p. 58). To be an effective school leader, principals have to develop and cultivate connections with the building staff, school board, superintendent, students, parents, and the community, which is enhanced by the principal’s competence and character. Gaining the trust of these individuals will improve the principal’s ability to gain support from these stakeholders (Gysbers & Henderson, 2001; Maxwell, 2007; Schmidt, 2003).

Bryk, Sebring, Kerbow, Rollow, and Easton (1998), who have been tracing the evolution of reform in Chicago schools since 1988, stated that:

Principals work together with a supportive base of parents, teachers, and community members to mobilize initiatives. Their efforts broadly focus along two major dimensions: first, reaching out to parents and community to strengthen the ties between local school professionals and the clientele they are to serve; and second, working to expand the professional capacities of individual teachers, to promote the formation of a coherent professional community, and to direct resources toward enhancing the quality of instruction. (Bryk et al, 1998, p. 270)
Elmore (2000) indicated that:

The job of administrative leaders is primarily about enhancing the skills and knowledge of people in the organization, creating a common culture of expectations around the use of those skills and knowledge, holding the various pieces of the organization together in a productive relationship with each other, and holding individuals accountable for their contributions to the collective result. (p. 15)

**Role Confusion for School Counselors**

Role confusion has been a concern for school counselors since the formation of the school counseling profession and continues to be an issue today (Amatea & Clark, 2005; Burnham & Jackson, 2000; Leuwerke et al., 2009; McGlothlin & Miller, 2008; Monteiro-Leitner et al., 2006; Ponec & Brock, 2000; Ribak-Rosenthal, 1994; Zalaquett, 2005). The noncounseling duties performed by school counselors have worried a number of researchers throughout the years (Baker, 1992; Bemak, 2000; Gysbers & Henderson, 2000; Kirchner & Setchfield, 2005; Schmidt, 2003). Murray (1995) asserted that school counselors

have become persons for all seasons . . . the actual duties and tasks of the position (as opposed to the printed job description) have multiplied and the guidance counselor seems to be involved with, or even in charge of, nearly every aspect of school operation. (p. 5)

As noted above, Brott and Myers (1999) stated that
In spite of the best efforts of professional associations, accrediting bodies, and training programs to define the profession of school counseling, studies cited in the literature indicate that the actual functions of counselors in the schools do not always reflect what have been identified as the best practices in school counseling. (p. 339)

An article by Perussé et al. (2004) explained that the ASCA has determined the role of school counselors at the national level while school principals have been deciding the role of school counselors at the local level. Ribak-Rosenthal (1994) commented that when the building principal is instituting the role of school counselors, the principal often assigns inappropriate tasks to school counselors. Leuwerke et al. (2009) noted that principals frequently delegate clerical tasks to school counselors that are in conflict to the role definition of school counselors described in the ASCA National Model. The findings from the study conducted by Perussé et al. (2004) show that more that 80% of the secondary school principals surveyed identified “registration and scheduling” of students “administering cognitive, aptitude, and achievement tests; and maintaining students records” as appropriate tasks for school counselors (p. 157).

The result of Burnham and Jackson’s (2000) study supported other writers’ claims that school counselors are engaging in noncounseling activities. They found that of the 80 certified school counselors that completed their questionnaire, 52 were requesting and receiving student records, 46 were scheduling students, 39 were involved in some capacity with students’ transcripts, 35 were office sitting, and several were involved in
clubs and organizations (31), bus duty (30), attendance (22), and hall, restroom, and lunch duties (21).

Fitch et al. (2001) found that school counselors repeatedly take on responsibilities that are vaguely associated with their training and endorsed by the ASCA. The aforementioned study found that future administrators prioritized the role of school counselors appropriately; however, many “rated discipline, record keeping, registration, special education assistance and administering tests as significant or highly significant” tasks for school counselors (p. 96). These tasks prioritized as being significant and highly significant are not tasks endorsed by the ASCA National Model.

Similarly, Zalaquett (2005) surveyed 500 elementary school principals in Florida and discovered that these principals ranked counseling, consultation, and coordination of services as top duties for school counselors. He also found that many school counselors were taking part in duties that are considered noncounseling duties by the ASCA. For example, school counselors were participating in the administration of the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT). They were also involved in scheduling and disciplining of students.

Kirchner and Setchfield (2005) compared school counselors’ and principals’ perceptions of the school counselor role by using a survey developed by Fitch et al. (2001). The authors found that principals more frequently supported role incongruent statements compared to school counselors. Principals endorsed registration and scheduling, testing, disciplining, record keeping, and providing special education assistance to students as appropriate school counselor tasks.
Monteiro-Leitner et al. (2006) surveyed school principals, professional school counselors, and counselors-in-training regarding their perceptions of the school counselors’ role and the use of their time. The result from this survey indicates that principals believe that school counselors should spend time on noncounseling duties such as taking part in Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and monitoring hall, lunch, bathroom, and bus duties. Professional school counselors and counselors-in-training feel that they should not spend any time on these activities.

In a related study, Amatea and Clark (2005) interviewed 26 school administrators (15 principals and 11 assistant principals). The researchers wanted to better understand how school administrators conceptualize the role of school counselors. The results from the study showed that one fourth of the participants saw the school counselor as part of the administrative team. They expressed relying on school counselors to carry out activities such as “scheduling, coordination of the standardized testing program, coordination of the special education staffing and placement process, referrals of students for outside services and ‘pinch hitting’ as a disciplinarian, substitute teacher, lunchroom supervisor, or bus duty representative” (p. 23). One third of the participants stated that they would like their school counselor to be a collaborative case consultant who would be able to assist parents, teachers, and administrators on how to respond to individual student’s social, mental, emotional, and educational needs. Only 3 out of 26 participants saw the school counselor as an innovative school leader, a role endorsed by the ASCA. In this role, the school counselor would assist staff members in enhancing their
performance and improve the way they interact with students, students’ families, and other staff members.

Dodson (2009) compared the perceptions of administrators regarding the high school counselor role in the Recognized ASCA Model Program (RAMP) against “the perceptions administrators had of the high school counselor role in counseling departments that had not received the RAMP designation” (p. 480). The study revealed that there were differences in administrators’ perceptions of appropriate school counselor role between RAMP-designated schools and schools that did not receive the RAMP designation. The study results show that the perceptions of administrators from RAMP-designated schools recognized that their school counselor is carrying out guidance curriculum activities in the classroom more frequently than counselors in non RAMP-designated schools. The RAMP-designated school principals rated activities such as executing individual student academic planning, interpreting student records, and providing group counseling services higher than schools that did not receive the RAMP designation. In addition, principals from RAMP-designated schools perceived that their counselors were “counseling students who have disciplinary problem[s],” and “providing teachers with suggestions for better management of study hall” (p. 483) more frequently than non RAM-designated schools.

**Summary**

In 2003, the ASCA created comprehensive school counseling program guidelines outlined in the ASCA National Model. In order to implement this model, school counselors must garner the support of the building principal. This could be hindered if
the principals’ concept about the role of the school counselor differs from the role of school counselors outlined in the ASCA National Model. No published research was found that focused on the implementation of the ASCA National Model by high school principals in their schools. The purpose of this study was to investigate the implementation of the ASCA National Model by high school principals in their schools. Investigating the experience of high school principals who successfully implemented the ASCA National Model in their school and understanding the impetus for implementation could assist school counselors and principals desiring to implement the ASCA National Model in their schools.

Chapter 2 provides a detailed description of the methodology used in this study, including the purpose of the study, specific methodology for participant selection, data collection, and data analysis.
CHAPTER II
METHODOLOGY

In 2003, the ASCA created comprehensive school counseling program guidelines outlined in the ASCA National Model. In order to implement this model, school counselors must garner the support of the building principal. This could be hindered if the principal’s concept about the role of school counselors differs from the role of school counselors outlined in the ASCA National Model. No published research was found that focused on the implementation of the ASCA National Model by high school principals in their schools. The purpose of this study was to examine the implementation of the ASCA National Model by high school principals in their schools in order to discover (a) their experience while implementing and (b) the impetus for implementing this model in their schools. Investigating the experiences of high school principals who successfully implemented the ASCA National Model in their school and understanding the impetus for implementation could assist school counselors and principals desiring to implement the ASCA National Model in their schools.

This chapter provides a detailed description of the methodology used in this study, including the purpose of the study, specific methodology for participant selection, data collection, and data analysis.

Phenomenological Research Design

The researcher chose a qualitative, phenomenological research design for this study. This design was chosen to obtain detailed information about the implementation of the ASCA National Model by high school principals in their schools. The goal of this
study was to illuminate the experiences of high school principals who successfully implemented the ASCA National Model in their schools and the impetus for doing so.

Qualitative research is inductive in nature in that the analysis of data attempts to identify patterns and themes in order to gain a more comprehensive awareness of the subject being explored (Creswell, 2007). Creswell (1998) defined qualitative research as:

An inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem. The researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyzes words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting. (p. 15)

Qualitative research methods take an integrative and naturalistic approach towards the world and are often thought of as providing a better understanding of the complexity of human behavior and social interactions (Creswell, 1998). Qualitative researchers focus on meaning and how individuals experience and make sense of the world (Patton, 2002). Lapan, Quartaroli, and Riemer (2012) explained that:

Qualitative studies focus on giving voice to those who live experiences no one else could know about directly, asking research questions that encourage reflection and insight rather than assessing performance on tests or other quantitative measures emphasized in traditional quantitative research. (p. 9)

The main objective of phenomenological research design is to illuminate the meaning and essence of the lived experience for an individual or a group of individuals about a specific phenomenon (Creswell, 2007; Moustakas, 1994; Patton, 2002). According to Patton, phenomenological research design concentrates on investigating
how individuals “make sense of experience and transform experience into consciousness” (p. 104). He stated that “this requires methodologically, carefully, and thoroughly capturing and describing how people experience some phenomenon” (p. 104). Patton reported that to obtain such information, the researcher must thoroughly question individuals who have experienced the phenomenon under inquiry. The goal of this research study followed the objective of a phenomenological research design; consequently, a phenomenological design was used to investigate the implementation of the ASCA National Model by high school principals in their schools.

Welman and Krugar (2004) conveyed that the phenomenologists are concerned with understanding social and psychological phenomena from the perspectives of people involved. Phenomenological research method enabled the researcher to find out “what an experience means for the persons who have had the experience and are able to provide comprehensive description of it” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 13). Phenomenological research design allowed for a greater understanding of the research question under inquiry.

The Researcher

In qualitative research, the researcher is considered the research instrument (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). The research instrument in this study is a female who was born in Guyana and became an American citizen in 1989. She is a doctoral candidate in the Counselor Education and Supervision Program at Kent State University. She is a Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor in the state of Ohio, a Licensed Professional Counselor in the state of North Carolina, and a Nationally Certified Counselor.
The researcher acknowledged that she was entering the research process with some assumptions about the phenomenon under inquiry and therefore, practiced the phenomenological concept of epoché or bracketing. “In the epoché, we set aside our prejudgments, biases, and preconceived ideas about things” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 85). According to Moustakas, “the value of the epoché principle is that it inspires one to examine biases and enhances one’s openness even if a perfect and pure state is not achieved” (p. 61).

In order to investigate the research question, the researcher bracketed or “shut out” her preconceived notions and opinions about the phenomenon under investigation (Moustakas, 1994, p. 60). She bracketed her experiences and sought to “rely on intuition, imagination and universal structures to obtain a picture of the experience” (Creswell, 1998, p. 52). The researcher bracketed her biases by utilizing reflective journals, peer debriefing, and an auditor. She also set aside what she thought she already knew about the phenomenon she was investigating. The assumptions held by the researcher were as follows:

1. Principals will have an accurate recollection about the experience of implementing the ASCA National Model in their schools.
2. Principals will have an accurate recollection about their decision to implement the ASCA National Model in their schools.
3. Principals will be truthful when answering the researcher’s questions.
4. Principals will have an understanding of the ASCA National Model.
5. Principals recognized the importance of the ASCA National Model.
6. Principals were willing and active participants when the decision to implement the ASCA National Model in their schools was made.

7. Principals had an understanding of the school counselor’s role.

8. Principals and school counselors had a cooperative working relationship when the decision to implement the ASCA National Model in their schools was made.

9. The high schools had the financial support and resources to implement the ASCA National Model in their schools.

**Participants and Selection Procedures**

Since the researcher was investigating the implementation of the ASCA National Model by high school principals in their schools and their school had to have received the Recognized ASCA Model Program (RAMP) award, purposefully selecting participants based on criteria was necessary (Creswell, 2007; Yin, 2009). Bogdan and Biklen (2003) stated that purposive sampling is a process in which the researcher, “chooses subjects, places, and other dimensions of a research site to include in the research to enlarge the analysis or to test particular emerging themes and working hypotheses” (p. 261). The researcher chose specific elements from the population that brought forth information about the topic under inquiry (Patton, 2002). Purposeful sampling was used to focus on the selection of information rich cases, which assists in the examination of meanings, interpretations, and processes (Patton, 2002). According to Creswell, it is essential to find participants who have experienced the phenomenon being examined.
During the 2013–2014 academic year, the researcher contacted principals inviting them to take part in this study. Numerous principals stated that their time was already constrained and that they could not allot the time needed to take part in this research study. Several principals reported that they were only taking part in tasks that were required by their state or school districts. Based on this feedback, principals were selected based on convenience but with the necessary criteria for participation. Principals needed to be high school principals who took part in the decision and implementation of the ASCA National Model in their school and their school received the Recognized ASCA Model Program (RAMP) award during the 2010–2011, 2011–2012, or 2012–2013 academic years and be willing to participate in two digitally recorded individual face-to-face interviews with the first lasting approximately 90 minutes and the second lasting approximately 60 minutes.

In 2003, the ASCA developed the RAMP award to honor school counseling programs that have fully implemented the ASCA National Model with demonstrated evidence of success for K–12 students (www.schoolcounselor.org). Schools are recipients of the RAMP award because their school counseling program is aligned with the standards outlined in the ASCA National Model (www.schoolcounselor.org). Schools that receive the RAMP award are devoted towards developing and implementing a comprehensive school counseling program focusing on the academic, career, and personal/social development of each student (www.schoolcounselor.org). According to ASCA, a comprehensive school counseling program is data driven and answers the question: “How are students different because of what school counselors do?” (p. 9).
The researcher obtained a list from ASCA that showed the RAMP honorees (J. Cook, personal communication, January 22, 2014). To date, 491 schools are RAMP recipients since the establishment of the RAMP award in 2003. Of the 491 RAMP recipients, 169 are high schools. During the 2010–2011 academic year, 31 high schools received the RAMP award, 35 during the 2011–2012 academic year, and 25 during the 2012–2013 academic year totaling 91 during the 2010–2011, 2011–2012, and 2012–2013 academic years. In this study, participants were high school principals who took part in the implementation of the ASCA National Model in their school and whose school received the RAMP award during the 2010–2011, 2011–2012, or 2012–2013 academic years. An inclusion criterion for this study was that participants be principals whose school received the RAMP award during 2010–2011, 2011–2012, or 2012–2013 academic years. This assured that the experience of implementing the ASCA National Model in their school would still be fresh in their minds, which would enhance the possibility of providing rich descriptions about their experience.

The focus of this study was limited to high schools in order to provide research consistency; high, middle, and elementary school settings are quite different. The issues that confront high schools differ greatly from those that exist in the middle and elementary school level (Zalaquett, 2005). There is also a notable contrast in the developmental levels and the unique needs of the students in the high, middle, and elementary levels that includes age appropriate programs and developmental issues (Zalaquett, 2005).
Procedure

Prior to contacting potential principals, the researcher obtained approval for this study from the Kent State University Human Subjects Review Board (HSRB; see Appendix B). The researcher obtained two lists from the ASCA that showed the RAMP recipients. The first list indicated the name of the school, grade level (elementary, middle, or high), principal name, principal e-mail address, school address, school phone number, school fax number, and the year the school became the RAMP honoree. The second list contained the same information mentioned above; however, only the names of high schools that received the RAMP award during the 2010–2011, 2011–2012, or 2012–2013 academic years were listed.

The researcher utilized the second list to obtain the name and contact information of principals. The researcher wrote this information on an index card. The researcher assigned a number to each card in order to identify each principal and to guarantee confidentiality. The index card was only accessible to the researcher and the co-directors of her dissertation committee.

Of the six school districts that participated in this research study, one school district required that the researcher receive approval from the district’s data and accountability office. Another required the researcher to obtain approval from the Office of Program and Evaluation. The researcher submitted to the appropriate office for both school districts: an application, approval letter from the researcher’s university Human Subjects Review Board, interview protocols, recruitment letter, and an informed consent form. One of the two school districts also required and the researcher included a $25.00
non-refundable processing fee, her curriculum vitae, and a letter of recommendation from one of the co-directors of her dissertation committee. The researcher was granted approval to conduct the research study in both school districts. After receiving approval from these two school districts, the researcher then contacted principals in all six school districts.

These principals were contacted via telephone by this researcher (see Appendix C). They were provided with a description of the proposed study and the screening procedure. They were also given the opportunity to ask questions about the study.

The researcher asked screening questions (see Appendix D) to determine principals’ eligibility for this study. Potential participants needed to: (a) be a high school principal who took part in the decision and implementation of the ASCA National Model in their school; (b) have received the RAMP award for the 2010–2011, 2011–2012, or 2012–2013 academic year at their high school; and (c) be willing to participate in two digitally recorded individual face-to-face interviews with the first lasting approximately 90 minutes and the second lasting approximately 60 minutes. Selection was based on the principals meeting the selection criteria and their willingness to participate in this study. If a principal did not meet the inclusion criteria, the researcher thanked them for their time and excluded the principal from the study. If the principal met the inclusion criteria, the researcher scheduled an individual face-to-face interview with the principal on a day, time, and location most convenient to them.

Once a willing and qualified principal was identified, the researcher sent a packet of information regarding the study by postal mail to the principal. Included in this packet
were a cover letter (see Appendix E) that explained the purpose of the research study and the screening form that was used to ensure that the principal met the inclusion criteria. The researcher also included the first interview protocol (see Appendix F). The interview protocol was included to inform the principal of topics to be covered during the initial individual face-to-face interview. Principals were asked to complete and retain the screening form. The researcher collected the screening form prior to beginning the first interview. The principal’s assigned number from the index card was written on the screening form by the researcher for identification and to ensure confidentiality.

The first interview was scheduled to last approximately 90 minutes. It began with each principal signing a form giving their consent to participate in this research study and for their interview to be recorded digitally (see Appendix G). Principals were given an opportunity to ask questions regarding the form and the research study. All principals signed the consent form. The researcher informed each principal of the methods that were being used to protect their confidentiality. At this time, each principal selected a pseudonym for data presentation. Principals were made aware that they could discontinue their participation in this study at any time without recourse.

The researcher asked each principal questions from the demographic questionnaire (see Appendix H) which was created to gather data about the principal. Lastly, the researcher asked questions from a previously developed interview protocol (see Appendix F). General questions were asked first and specific questions followed. At the end of the first interview, the researcher scheduled the second interview with the
principal. She also recorded her thoughts and reactions in a reflective journal in order to reflect on emerging themes and the overall process of the interview.

Shortly after the interview, the researcher transcribed the digitally recorded interview and checked the transcription for accuracy. Data were stored as an electronic file on the researcher’s computer. Electronic files were labeled with the principal’s assigned number. Confidently was important throughout the research process. All data relating to this research study were kept confidential and stored in a secured location.

The researcher mailed a summary of the principal’s transcription and structural descriptions of their experience regarding the implementation of the ASCA National Model to the principal’s preferred mailing address. The process used to write the structural descriptions is described further in the data analysis section of Chapter 2. Principals were asked to examine their transcript and structural descriptions for accuracy and provide the researcher with feedback prior to the second interview. The second interview was conducted so that each principal had an opportunity to review his or her transcript and structural descriptions for accuracy, also known as member check (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Member check is described in greater detail in the trustworthiness section of Chapter 2. A second interview with each principal provided the researcher the opportunity to verify themes that emerged from their first interview and to explore specific areas in greater detail (see Appendix I). Immediately following the second interview, the researcher transcribed the digitally recorded interview and checked the transcript for accuracy. After transcription of the second interview, the researcher returned to the original data and included any new relevant data from the second
interview. After the member check interview, no additional data were revealed and all principals stated that they did not want to make any changes to their transcription or structural descriptions.

The researcher validated her data and confirmed it to be free of bias. Peer debriefing, an auditor, and reflective journaling were used to confirm themes and adherence to the data analysis process. The mailing of the research findings to principals also helped with further validation.

**Trustworthiness**

Creswell (1998) stated that verification is a process used in qualitative research to ensure trustworthiness and quality of the research. He described the verification process as “an attempt to assess the ‘accuracy’ of the findings, as best described by the researcher and participants” (p. 206). Lincoln and Guba (1985) reported that qualitative research is trustworthy when it accurately represents the experiences of the participants in the study. They developed a model for establishing trustworthiness in qualitative research that consists of four criteria: (a) credibility, (b) dependability, (c) transferability, and (d) confirmability.

**Credibility**

Credibility criteria entail the adequate representation of the interpretation of the phenomenon under investigation (Sandelowski, 1994). Sandelowski indicated that credibility is determined when the study participants identify the research result as their own experiences. To ensure credibility, the researcher engaged in the following activities: (a) member check, (b) reflectivity, and (c) peer review. Member check
requires the principals’ contribution by providing them the opportunity to share their opinion regarding the accuracy of the structural descriptions of the data (Creswell, 2007). After the initial interview with each principal, the researcher transcribed the interview and constructed a summary of the interview. The researcher mailed this summary and the structural descriptions of their experience regarding the implementation of the ASCA National Model to the principal’s preferred mailing address. The process used to write the structural descriptions is described further in the data analysis section of Chapter 2. Each principal was asked to examine his or her transcript and structural descriptions for accuracy and provide the researcher with feedback prior to the second interview.

The second part of the member check consisted of the follow-up interview. The follow-up interview occurred approximately two weeks after principals received their transcript and structural descriptions for review. The member check interview lasted approximately 60 minutes. During this interview, the researcher provided the principal with an opportunity to make corrections to his or her transcript and structural descriptions and provide additional or new information. Each principal was asked to comment on the accuracy of his or her transcript and structural descriptions, indicate areas that were unclear or misleading, help clarify any questions the researcher had, and provide any additional information that was believed to be relative (see Appendix I). This feedback enhanced the trustworthiness and credibility of the results (Fassinger, 2005; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Reflectivity is the idea of awareness in qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The researcher was aware and bracketed her assumptions throughout the research
process. To increase credibility, the researcher explored her personal feelings that might influence the study. She used a reflective process of writing detailed field notes during and immediately after each interview. Process notes included observations, thoughts, feelings, and any questions that needed to be clarified during the second interview. If needed, the process notes would have been used in the development of follow-up questions.

The peer reviewer has expertise in phenomenological research methodology, knowledge of the research topic, and served as a “devil’s advocate” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 309). The peer reviewer was consulted for feedback and “to provide an external check of the research process” (Creswell, 2007, p. 208). The peer reviewer helped the researcher with debriefing the interview process. This included letting the researcher discuss her reactions, assumptions, thoughts, and feelings relating to the interviewing process. The researcher also discussed and analyzed the data with the peer reviewer, talked about the researcher’s interpretations of the data, and formulated subsequent steps in the data analysis process (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The peer reviewer selected for this study was a doctoral student in the counselor education and supervision program.

**Dependability**

Shenton (2004) stated that to speak to dependability, the researcher should report the procedure of the study in “detail, thereby enabling a future researcher to repeat the work, if not necessarily to gain the same result” (p. 71). Doing so may lead to the research design being looked upon as a “prototype model” (p. 71). The researcher used an external auditor who was knowledgeable in qualitative research to review
instrumentation, participants and selection procedures, interview protocol, analysis, transcriptions, significant statements, formulated meanings, themes, and the researcher’s reflective journal. The external auditor reviewed these items to confirm that the researcher adhered to the phenomenological method in the data analysis process. Creswell (1998) indicated that an external auditor is someone who is skilled in conducting qualitative research design. The external auditor for this study was a doctoral graduate from the Counseling and Human Development Services Program at Kent State University.

Transferability

Streubert and Carpenter (1995) defined transferability in qualitative research as the likelihood that the finding of a study will have meaning to other situations. Generality is irrelevant in phenomenological research design (Creswell, 2007; Moustakas, 1994; Patton, 2002). The goal of phenomenological research is to describe the particular phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994).

The researcher provided a dense description of the research context and adequate descriptive data that the reader can assess and evaluate transferability. Merriam (2002) explained that thick description is “providing enough description to contextualize the study such that readers will be able to determine the extent to which their situation matches the research context, and hence, whether findings can be transferred” (p. 31). Lincoln and Guba (1985) indicated that transferability of the research finding to another situation is the responsibility of the person wanting to transfer the finding not the responsibility of the researcher.
**Confirmability**

Confirmability is an approach to ensure neutrality (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). They indicated that this means that the data is unbiased. They also stated that if a study shows credibility, the study also encompasses confirmability. Audit trail is a principle technique for establishing confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Per Lincoln and Guba, audit trail is a description of the steps taken from the start of a research study to the reporting of the research findings. The audit trail allows the reader to follow the steps taken by the researcher throughout the research project. It allows the reader to comprehend how the researcher established the themes from the data and conclude the results (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In order to establish the audit trail, the researcher kept written records of all steps taken in the data analysis process. She also employed an external auditor to review the written records of the data analysis process, findings and interpretations.

**Interview Protocol**

Bogdan and Biklen (2003) recommended that researchers conduct interviews using a semi-structured interview format. They defined a semi-structured interview format as a procedure that allows the researcher to use interview questions as a guide while allowing the principals to define the content of the interview. This interview format is suitable when employing phenomenological research design. “The phenomenological interview involves an informal, interactive process and utilizes open-ended comments and questions” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 114). For example, the researcher asked broader questions initially and follow-up questions were based on the principal’s responses. Asking broader open-ended questions followed by additional
questions provided the principals the opportunity to elaborate and clarify their responses (Fassinger, 2005).

This interview structure is dependent on the competence of the researcher to conduct the interview (Polkinghorne, 1989). The researcher in this study has experience in interviewing due to her training and experience as a licensed clinical counselor. All principals were asked interview questions that were developed by the researcher. The interview protocol was designed to last approximately 90 minutes. Questions for each principal were as follows:

1. Prior to implementing the ASCA National Model, did your school have a comprehensive counseling program? If yes, please explain the program. If no, explain the program you had in place.
2. How did you learn about the ASCA National Model?
3. Who initially advocated for the implementation of the ASCA National Model?
4. Who did you consult with when considering implementing the ASCA National Model?
5. Who was influential to you when deciding to implement the ASCA National Model?
6. What benefits did you consider when deciding to implement the ASCA National Model?
7. What drawbacks did you consider when deciding to implement the ASCA National Model?
8. What other factors did you consider when deciding to implement the ASCA National Model?

9. What support did you receive from assistant principal(s) when considering implementing the ASCA National Model?

10. What support did you receive from the superintendent when considering implementing the ASCA National Model?

11. What support did you receive from the board of education when considering implementing the ASCA National Model?

12. What support did you receive from school counselor(s) when considering implementing the ASCA National Model?

13. What support did you receive from other staff members when considering implementing the ASCA National Model?

14. What else would you like to share about your decision to implement the ASCA National Model in your school?

15. What assistance did you receive from the assistant principal(s) with implementing the ASCA National Model?

16. What assistance did you receive from the superintendent with implementing the ASCA National Model?

17. What assistance did you receive from the board of education with implementing the ASCA National Model?

18. What assistance did you receive from the school counselor(s) with implementing the ASCA National Model?
19. What assistance did you receive from other staff members with implementing the ASCA National Model?

20. What resistance did you receive while implementing the ASCA National Model?

21. Describe your overall experience with implementing the ASCA National Model.

22. Based on your experience with implementing the ASCA National Model, what do you wish you would have done differently?

23. What else would you like to share about your experience with implementing the ASCA National Model?

24. What advice would you give to a peer contemplating implementing the ASCA National Model?

Follow-up questions were asked as warranted.

The second interview fulfilled the role of a member check. It provided the principals with an opportunity to review their transcript from the first interview for accuracy and to clarify statements that they felt were unclear. The second interview protocol was designed to last approximately 60 minutes. All principals were asked the following questions:

1. Does the transcript you received accurately represent our first meeting? If not, why?

2. Are there any corrections that need to be made to the transcript? If yes, please describe.
3. As you read the transcript, are there any sections that you would like to clarify or explain in greater detail? If yes, please describe.

4. What thoughts, if any, have you had since our last meeting about your experience while implementing and the impetus for implementing the ASCA National in your school?

5. Is there any component that you feel was left out? If yes, please describe.

At this point, the researcher reviewed with the principal a summary of their first interview. Each principal was asked to reflect on the following questions:

1. Does my portrayal compare accurately with your experience?
2. Is any facet of your experience absent?

Following the second interview, the researcher continued data analysis. At the conclusion of data analysis, a summary was sent to the principal’s preferred mailing address. Each principal was asked to reflect on the emergent themes and to provide feedback.

**Data Analysis**

This researcher utilized Moustakas’ (1994) modified version of the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen method of data analysis for phenomenological research. This inductive process included the following steps for each principal: (a) identifying significant statements and meaning units; (b) clustering meaning units into themes; (c) synthesizing meaning units and themes into textural descriptions; (d) creating individual-structural descriptions; (e) constructing textural-structural descriptions of the essence of the experience; and (f) generating a composite summary of textural-structural
descriptions of the experiences common to all of the principals. Below is a description of the steps that the researcher used for data analysis. Table 2 provides an example.

Table 2

Data Analysis Process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Procedure</th>
<th>Action Taken</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identifying Significant Statements and Meaning Units</td>
<td>Initial list of relevant units of meaning were extracted from the principals’ responses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clustering Meaning Units into Themes</td>
<td>Meaning units clustered to identify themes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synthesizing Meaning Units and Themes into Textural Descriptions</td>
<td>Individual textural descriptions were composed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating Individual Structural Descriptions</td>
<td>Individual summaries based upon individual textural descriptions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constructing Textural-Structural Descriptions of the Essence of the Experience</td>
<td>Combining the textural and structural descriptions to convey an overall meaning and essence of the experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generating a Composite Summary of Textural-Structural Descriptions</td>
<td>Integration of principals’ summaries into a general synthesis reflecting common themes and essence of the whole.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Step 1: Significant Statements and Meaning Units

Shortly after the first interview, the researcher transcribed the digitally recorded interview and checked the transcription for accuracy. The researcher read each transcript numerous times and highlighted textural statements that were pertinent for illustrating the implementation of the ASCA National Model by principals in their schools, a process
known as horizontalization of the data. Merriam (2009) stated that “horizontalization is the process of laying out all the data for examination and treating the data as having equal weight” (p. 26). The researcher considered each highlighted textural statement as possessing equal value. The highlighted textural statements in each transcript were copied and pasted into a separate Microsoft Word document for further analysis. Throughout the data analysis process the researcher employed epoché in an attempt to put aside her personal views and all predetermined beliefs about the phenomenon.

The researcher examined the highlighted textural statements obtained from each principal to determine if they were meaning units or invariant horizons. Invariant horizons, as defined by Moustakas (1994), “pointed to the unique qualities of an experience, those that stand out” (p. 128). To be considered an invariant horizon or meaning unit, each textural statement had to be: (a) directly related to understanding the implementation of the ASCA National Model by high school principals in their schools, (b) able to be extracted from the text and grouped with other statements, and (c) nonrepetitive and nonoverlapping. Textural statements that met these criteria were considered meaning units or essential descriptive viewpoints for understanding the principals’ experiences. Redundant statements and others not meeting the criteria were eliminated, including overlapping or vague statements.

**Step 2: Clustering and Thematizing of Meaning Units**

Following the identification of meaning units, the researcher printed the document and cut each meaning unit into a strip. The researcher read each strip (meaning unit) and clustered similar strips (meaning units) together. This process was repeated several times
until the researcher felt comfortable that all the strips (meaning units) were grouped into emerging themes. The researcher kept track of this process and the emerging themes by documenting the clustering of the meaning units and the emerging themes on a Microsoft Word document. The researcher repeated this process with the data from each principal.

**Step 3: Individual Textural Descriptions**

Creswell (2007) stated that the textural description is the “what” of the phenomena; “what was experienced” (p. 55). The researcher described for each principal “what” the principal experienced by using verbatim statements from the principal’s transcript and by synthesizing meaning units and themes. The textural descriptions consisted of statements that were germane to the individual principal’s experience (actions, feelings, and thoughts) relating to the phenomenon being examined: the implementation of the ASCA National Model by principals in their schools. For example, Mr. Jackson stated (textural description),

The experience was positive. Again, we were trying to get more aligned. We took this as an opportunity to align what we are doing in student services with what we were doing in the classroom or academically through our school improvement plan. So, it really helped us in that regard. It helped us improve our services.

**Step 4: Individual Structural Descriptions**

Creswell (2007) stated that the structural description is the “how” of the phenomena; “how it was experienced” (p. 55). The structural description, in this study, was how each principal experienced the phenomenon in terms of the conditions,
situations, or context (Creswell, 2007). According to Moustakas (1994), a structural
description is a narrative of the “underlying dynamics of the experience, the themes and
qualities that account for ‘how’ feelings and thoughts are connected” to the phenomenon
(p. 135).

In order to develop a structural description, the researcher utilized imaginative
variation. Moustakas (1994) defined the task of imaginative variation as: “To seek
possible meanings through the utilization of imagination varying the frames of reference,
employing polarities and reversals, and approaching the phenomenon from divergent
perspectives, different positions, roles or functions” (pp. 97-98).

Through imaginative variation, the researcher was able to develop an augmented
account and seek all possible meanings of the principal’s experience. The structural
description was deduced by the researcher from the principal’s textural description,
staying as close as possible to the cited nature of the principal’s original descriptions and
relying heavily on the principal’s own words. From the individual textural descriptions
section quoted above, the researcher formulated a structural description of Mr. Jackson’s
experience. The structural description is: Mr. Jackson had a positive experience with the
implementation of the ASCA National Model in his school because he viewed
implementation as an opportunity to achieve their goal of aligning and improving the
services offered within their school. Implementing the ASCA National Model helped
them achieved their goal of improving services offered within their school. This was the
first time in the data analysis process that the researcher interpreted the principal’s words.
The researcher mailed each principal two documents prior to the second interview: (a) transcript of the first interview, and (2) structural descriptions. Each principal was asked to review the transcript and structural descriptions and provide the researcher with corrective feedback prior to the second interview. During the second interview, the researcher provided the principal with an opportunity to make corrections to their transcript and structural descriptions, and provide additional or new information. Each principal was asked to comment on the accuracy of his or her transcript and structural descriptions, indicate areas that were unclear or misleading, and provide any additional information that he or she believed to be relative. Each principal was asked to confirm that the structural descriptions compiled by the researcher encapsulated the essence of his or her responses. During the second interview, principals were also asked the following questions related to the structural descriptions: “Does my portrayal compare accurately with your experience?” “Is any facet of your experience absent?” and “Is there any component that you feel was left out? If yes, please describe.” The second interview was transcribed immediately and analyzed similarly to the first interview. After transcription of the second interview, the researcher returned to the original data and included any new relevant data from the second interview.

**Step 5: Textural-Structural Descriptions**

A textural-structural description is the synthesis of the “what” of the experience and “how” it was experienced to create the “essence” of each principal’s experiences regarding the implementation of the ASCA National Model in their school.
Texture and structure are in continual relationship... the relationship of texture and structure is not that of object and subject or concrete and abstract but of the appearance and the hidden coming together to create a fullness in understanding the essences of a phenomenon or experience. (Moustakas, 1994, p. 79)

For each principal, the researcher merged the two descriptions (textural and structural) that were created in steps three and four to form composite summary descriptions. The composite summary descriptions included the researcher’s understanding of “what” (texture) occurred, and “how” (structure) the experience occurred for each principal. These composite summary descriptions attempted to encapsulate the principal’s experiences supported by verbatim quotes that reflect the principal’s experiences.

**Step 6: Composite Textural-Structural Descriptions**

The composite textural-structural descriptions were developed from the principals’ textural-structural descriptions and themes. During this process, each principal’s themes were condensed into general themes. These general themes were common to the majority or all of the principals. This composite textural-structural description conveyed the essence of the implementation of the ASCA National Model as described by high school principals who implemented this model in their school.

**Summary**

This study was intended to answer the following research questions: What was the experience of high school principals who successfully implemented the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) National Model: A Framework for School Counseling
Programs in their schools? and, what was the impetus for high school principals to implement this model in their schools? A qualitative phenomenological research design was considered to be the most suitable way to learn the answers to these questions. This chapter described the methods that were used to investigate the implementation of the ASCA National Model by high school principals in their schools. Methods that were used to choose participants, to collect data, and to analyze the data were explained. Chapter 3 presents the findings of this study that resulted from the systematic data collection and analysis described in this chapter.
CHAPTER III

RESULTS

This chapter presents the findings of this phenomenological research study on the implementation of the ASCA National Model by high school principals in their schools. This chapter is divided into three primary sections. The first section presents the six principals to the reader, including demographic and relevant background information. The second section provides the data analysis process with examples. The final section presents the research findings.

Participants

The purposeful sample included six high school principals ranging in age between 43 and above 63. Of the six principals, one was a female. All of the principals were married and had children. Three described themselves as Caucasian and three as African American. All six principals met the aforementioned criteria for participating. All principals took part in the decision and implementation of the ASCA National Model in their school. Their school received the RAMP award during the 2010–2011, 2011–2012, or 2012–2013 academic years, and they all were willing to participate. Each principal was offered the opportunity to choose a pseudonym for data presentation. Two of the six principals asked that their first name be used, and four selected a pseudonym. Table 3 offers a summary of the demographic data for each participant.
Table 3

Demographic Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th># of Children</th>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th># of Years as Principal</th>
<th>School District</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Jackson</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Suburban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Raider</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Urban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Dapper</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Urban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Judy</td>
<td>Above 60</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Suburban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Jim</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Rural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Sixth</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Suburban</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Mr. Jackson**

Mr. Jackson is a 63-year-old African American male. He is married and has two children. Mr. Jackson has been a principal for 23 years and a principal at his current suburban public high school in the southeastern United States for seven years. He stated that prior to becoming a principal, he was an assistant principal for seven years. Before becoming an assistant principal, Mr. Jackson taught English for 13 years to students grade six through 12. He disclosed that he will be retiring in the upcoming year and expressed that he was excited.

Mr. Jackson reported that he was “invited to go into administration.” He credited the principal at the school where he was teaching for “introducing” him to administration
by hiring him as the summer school coordinator. According to Mr. Jackson, he “never went back into the classroom” after that summer of serving as the summer school coordinator. He indicated that the next academic year, he was assigned by the same principal to be the in-school suspension teacher. Mr. Jackson described taking a few courses before applying for an assistant principal position. He stated that “back in the ‘80s you could take a few courses and get into administration.” Per Mr. Jackson, completing a degree program was not required in order to become a school administrator.

Mr. Jackson emphasized that he enjoys being a principal. He described working with students, parents, and teachers as being fulfilling. Mr. Jackson affirmed taking pleasure in “overseeing the big picture, giving support to teachers so they can do their jobs and be successful, and watch kids learn and grow.” He indicated that the “least favorite part” of being a principal is “saying no” and “having decisions about education made by legislators.” Mr. Jackson admitted that he has learned how to “set parameters” and “say no in a professional manner” to students, parents, and staff. He indicated that he has been able to “keep up with legislative” changes but at times finds it difficult.

Mr. Jackson was the first principal to be interviewed. Both interviews took place in his office. He provided both verbal and written consent to participate in this research study. Mr. Jackson was friendly and actively engaged throughout the interviews, which was apparent by his body language and overall demeanor. Prior to the start of the interview, Mr. Jackson stated that he looked at the interview protocol and realized that the Dean of Students would be better equipped to answer the researcher’s questions. He then said that he realized that this research study is focused at “looking at principals.”
Mr. Jackson stated that he first heard of the ASCA National Model from his “Student Services Department” at a previous school in the same school district. According to Mr. Jackson, at the district level there was an emphasis on schools implementing the ASCA National Model and acquiring RAMP status. At this school, however, the Dean of Students advocated for the implementation of the ASCA National Model. Mr. Jackson indicated that when the Dean of Students introduced the subject of implementing the model in their school he was “delighted.” He reported that since, at the district level, an emphasis was already being placed on implementing this model, the Dean of Students and the entire Student Services Department moved forward with planning and implementing the model.

**Mr. Raider**

Mr. Raider is a 45-year-old African American male who is married with two children. His four-year tenure as a principal has been at his current urban public high school in the southeastern United States. Before becoming a principal, Mr. Raider was an assistant principal for one year. Prior to that, he was a history teacher for 10 years.

Mr. Raider stated that the principal at the school where he taught history suggested that he become a principal. Prior to his suggestion, Mr. Raider reported that he wanted to become a principal. He indicated that he has family members who are “education administrators” and he too wanted a leadership role after observing what they contributed to education.

Mr. Raider expressed that he likes being a principal. He stated that he enjoys “being a public servant, helping students navigate this important time in their lives, and
preparing them for the next level.” He also enjoys partnering with “the community and businesses.” According to Mr. Raider, that relationship is important because oftentimes “they can supplement resources that you know the district can’t provide and also provide opportunities for our students,” as well.

Mr. Raider identified the limitations of resources and his altered relationship with students as negative aspects of his role as principal. He stated that often resources are “not where we need them to be and that makes my job a little bit tougher.” He also pointed out that when he was a teacher, he saw and talked to the same students each day. He reported that “as principal, you don’t see the same students every day, and they see you in a different light.” In general however, Mr. Raider enjoys his role as principal.

Mr. Raider was the second principal to be interviewed. Both interviews took place in his office. He provided both verbal and written consent to participate in this research study. Mr. Raider provided concise answers to questions asked and did not elaborate after his initial response. He reported that the school counselor advocated for the implementation of the ASCA National Model in their school. Mr. Raider stated that “once he brought me the information and the document, I thought it would be a great recognition as well as an identity for our school; so, we just went full steam ahead.” He further stated that since the ASCA National Model was “nationally recognized as being effective and enhancing your best practices as a school, that was the motivation I needed to bring that type of label and identity to our school, to be known as an ASCA Model or RAMP school.”
Mr. Dapper

Mr. Dapper is a 55-year-old African American male. He is married and has two children. He has been a principal for four years. For the last three years, he served in his current role as principal of an urban public high school in the Midwestern United States. Prior to serving as a high school principal, he was an assistant principal and principal at an elementary school. At the beginning of his career, he taught mathematics and science for 14 years at the junior high school level.

Mr. Dapper indicated that in addition to his teaching degree he earned special education credentials and an early childhood certificate. He reported that the principal at the school where he was teaching “was looking for someone to take a kindergarten class one summer and as a favor to him” he did. Mr. Dapper asserted that the principal then asked him to take on other roles, which he did. He stated that by taking on additional roles, the principal encouraged him to get his “type 75” which is a credential required in order to become an administrator in his state and school district. Mr. Dapper acknowledged that he thought about becoming an administrator, and solidified his decision to do so after speaking with a few colleagues and friends. After completing the required training and passed the tests in order to become a principal, he applied for and accepted an “assistant principal position one summer.”

He stated that he enjoyed the role “not in the sense of what some people might think of as power, but by my understanding and guidance which led people to do better.” He pointed to feedback he received from his staff, such as, “thank you very much for helping me” and “I appreciate your guidance. Thank you.” Mr. Dapper reported that he
takes pleasure in being an educational leader whose responsibility to “drive instruction, to drive student engagement, to drive personal growth with my students as well as with my teachers, gives me a good feeling.” The title of principal “just happens to come with the job.”

Mr. Dapper explained that the “only drawback” of being a principal is “that oftentimes you are a lone wolf.” He went on to say that he cannot always share with the staff “the struggles . . . challenges, which the district has placed in front of you because it will pull them down.” He described the challenges as being “legal challenges,” “procedural challenges,” and “challenges that have been brought on by knee-jerk reaction to what the board has to deal with.”

Mr. Dapper was the third principal to be interviewed. Both interviews took place in his office. He provided both verbal and written consent to participate in this research study. Mr. Dapper was friendly and relaxed during the interviews as indicated by his calm tone of voice. He provided detailed answers to the researcher’s questions.

According to Mr. Dapper, he learned about the ASCA National Model from his school district through an email. He stated that his school district typically conveys information to staff via email. Mr. Dapper said that the school counselor at his school was interested in implementing the model. After speaking with a principal whose school had implemented the model, Mr. Dapper indicated that he decided that it was a “good model to implement.”
Ms. Judy

Ms. Judy described herself as an “above 60”-year-old-Caucasian female who is married with two children. She was the only female principal and the only participant who served as a school counselor and Chairperson of Guidance prior to becoming a principal. Ms. Judy’s entire tenure in the school system has been at her current suburban public school located in the southeastern United States. She stated that she obtained a job as a school counselor in 1988 and six years ago became the principal.

Ms. Judy shared that she acquired her first role as an administrator after she objected to the way an administrator was scheduling students. She shared that she vocalized her concerns to the building’s administration and was asked to develop and implement the master schedule for that academic year, which she did. According to Ms. Judy, she completed this task in conjunction with fulfilling her responsibility as a school counselor. She conveyed that the following year she transitioned “to the administrative side” and took courses to become an assistant principal.

Ms. Judy expressed her enjoyment with being a principal. She articulated that she has “definite ideas about the philosophy of students coming first and meeting their needs first.” She suggested that she is aware “that this can be a difficult philosophy to have and implement.” In addition, she acknowledged the difficulty that could occur if “you work with somebody who does not have that philosophy.” Ms. Judy proposed that it is “easier to be able to implement that philosophy and make decisions for the school based around it rather than trying to have that philosophy in a different position.”
Ms. Judy acknowledged that one of the positive aspects of her job “is that I can try to meet the students’ needs.” She pointed out that many times students do not know what “is happening with career and college choices” and how they may need to “change in order to be prepared for what they want to do after high school.” She also shared that she enjoys supporting and assisting staff in becoming knowledgeable by “looking at our students and seeing where we need to meet them; have them grow in order to meet their goals for their post-secondary options.” Ms. Judy emphasized that she feels privileged to have the opportunity to work with the local community. She declared that she has “been at this school since 1988, and most of the people in the community know me and I’m fortunate to have the community support.”

Ms. Judy acknowledged that a shortcoming of being a principal is that she has “many things to do” and is not able to be “as close to the students” as she would like. She talked about her encounter with students when she was a school counselor. She discussed being able to spend “all day talking to either groups or individual students and working with them and their parents.” Ms. Judy explained that as a principal, “responsible for 160 faculty and staff between 160-170 and being the liaison with our parent company, which is our school system, you do not get to spend the time with the students you would like to spend.” She reported that she has been traveling to different states and meeting with contractors because they are in the process of building a new high school. Ms. Judy emphasized that currently their school accommodates 2,730 students and is not equipped to house their current enrollment. She indicated that she is excited about the construction project.
Ms. Judy was the fourth principal to be interviewed. Both interviews took place in her office. She provided both verbal and written consent to participate in this research study. She was pleasant and composed during the interviews, as evidenced by her gentle and relaxed tone of voice. She provided comprehensive answers to the researcher’s questions. Ms. Judy stated that the school counselors advocated for the implementation of the ASCA National Model in their school. She reported that the school counselors were aware that they were doing more than what was outlined in the ASCA National Model. She went on to say that the school counselors “were seeing other schools getting awards for doing the ASCA model which was really less than what we were doing and of course they wanted that same recognition.”

Mr. Jim

Mr. Jim is a 43-year-old, married, Caucasian male with four children. He has been the principal at his current rural public high school located in the southeastern United States for eight years. Prior to his current position as principal, he was an assistant principal for two years. Mr. Jim reported that he started his career as a mathematics teacher, a job he held for 10 years.

Mr. Jim stated that during his tenure as a teacher “other people recognized leadership qualities in me, and they encouraged me to get an advanced degree in leadership.” He indicated that he earned his advanced degree four years prior to interviewing for an assistant principal position. According to Mr. Jim, he was a coach and indicated that he coached football and a “couple of other sports.” “Football was my main sport, and I continued to do that just because I liked doing it.” He asserted that as
an assistant principal or principal, “you can’t really coach and still do the leadership piece.” He went on to say that he was fortunate to be asked to interview for an assistant principal position and concluded by saying that “I basically went from the football field straight into the principal’s office.” Mr. Jim affirmed that the position of assistant principal was a leadership opportunity and “being a head football coach was also a leadership opportunity.” He verbalized that he cannot “say that I had that designed, and I had that mapped out, because I didn’t. It just kind of materialized.”

Mr. Jim expressed that one of the positive aspects of his role as principal is “being able to empower others whether it’s students, faculty, and staff.” He felt he was “a lot more impactful in this position than I was just merely being a teacher.” He indicated that “there was some leadership inside of me, I needed to exercise in another position, and it just happened to be in this position.” Mr. Jim reported that he enjoys “the interaction with the students and people more than anything.”

Mr. Jim pointed out that a disadvantage of his position is that he does not get to know “students at depth.” He indicated that he knows a lot of students but he does not know a lot about them. He continued by saying “when you are a teacher you understand and know your students at a deeper level. You just didn’t know as many.” However, he believes that he “touches more kids this way.”

Mr. Jim was the fifth principal to be interviewed. Both interviews took place at his office. He provided both verbal and written consent to participate in this research study. He was cordial and engaging during the interviews. He gave thorough answers to questions asked. Mr. Jim stated that the discussion to implement the ASCA National
Model did not begin “in my office or from our school improvement team.” He reported that the proposition came from the “district level school improvement team and from our superintendent.” According to Mr. Jim, “if the superintendent stands up and says this is important, people are going to do it and that’s kind of how this originated.”

**Mr. Sixth**

Mr. Sixth is a 51-year-old, married, Caucasian male with two children. His four-year tenure as a principal has been entirely at his current suburban public high school, located in the northeastern United States. Prior to his role as principal, Mr. Sixth held the position of assistant principal for 10 years. He also served as Dean of Students for three years and as a Special Education teacher for 10 years.

Mr. Sixth stated that it became a “natural progression” for him to become an assistant principal and eventually principal. He reported that he did not “put a tremendous amount of thought into it; you just wind up moving forward like that.” He further stated that “it just seemed to be the logical thing to do.”

Mr. Sixth suggested that one of the positive aspects of being a principal is having “a better ability to institute a change.” However, he indicated “the downside is you’re not as involved in the day to day running of the building as you are as an assistant principal.” He went on to say,

You get tied to your office. You don’t have the same ability to get out and get into the cafeteria or be in the hallway or walking into the classrooms. You’re like one step removed. Theoretically you go into teaching because you like kids and you want to help kids. Every step you take beyond that you spend less and less
time actually doing what you want, which is interacting with kids and trying to help them.

Mr. Sixth was the sixth and final principal to be interviewed. Both interviews took place in his office. He provided both verbal and written consent to participate in this research study. His responses to the researcher’s questions were short, and he did not elaborate after his initial response. During the interview, his body language was open, and he expressed nonverbal communication by frequent head nodding, widened eyes, and smiles. Mr. Sixth stated that the director of guidance advocated for the implementation of the ASCA National Model in their school. He indicated that “it seems like the way more schools are going in the future.” Mr. Sixth expressed appreciation for the support the staff is receiving from families and the community. He reported that he believes “the four year plan” is a part of the ASCA National Model and “there is also more outreach to the families to try to get the families in for the four year plan.” He went on to say that “it doesn’t have to be like it was when I went to high school.”

**Summary of Participants**

Each principal in this study provided detailed and descriptive responses regarding their experiences of implementing the ASCA National Model in their schools. The distinctiveness of each principal’s experience was also illustrated by commonalities shared by other principals and illuminating emergent themes that were more alike than different. Data analysis used principals’ verbatim responses to create shared themes amongst principals. The following section describes the data analysis process utilized to
generate the emergent themes relative to this study and provides examples taken from the data analysis.

**Data Analysis**

This researcher utilized Moustakas’ (1994) modified version of the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen method of data analysis for phenomenological research. These steps were discussed in the previous chapter. For an outline of the data analysis process utilized for this research, please see Table 3 in Chapter 2.

**Identifying Significant Statements and Meaning Units**

In Step 1 and throughout the data analysis process the researcher employed epoché in an attempt to put aside her personal views and all predetermined beliefs about the phenomenon. The initial step of the analytic process was to obtain a preliminary grouping of verbatim textural statements from the principal that resulted in the creation of meaning units. The researcher read each transcript and highlighted textural statements that were relevant for illustrating the implementation of the ASCA National Model by principals in their schools. The highlighted verbatim textural statements in each transcript were copied and pasted into a separate Microsoft Word document. These textural statements were reduced to meaning units. To determine whether or not a textural statement was a meaning unit, the textural statement was examined by asking three questions:

1. Was the identified textural statement directly related to understanding the implementation of the ASCA National Model by principals in their schools?
2. Could the textural statement be extracted from the text and grouped with other statements?

3. Was the textural statement nonrepetitive and nonoverlapping?

Redundant statements and others not meeting the criteria were eliminated, including overlapping or vague statements. Table 4 provides an example of portions of meaning units obtained in this step for Mr. Jackson related to his experience of implementing the ASCA National Model.

Table 4

*Mr. Jackson Meaning Unit*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Meaning Units</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Jackson</td>
<td>The experience was positive. We took this as an opportunity to align what we are doing in student services with what we were doing in the classroom or academically through our school improvement plan. So, it really helped us in that regard. It helped us improve our services.</td>
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It also helped with the communication because we were doing something new. Then, the entire faculty, the teachers were more aware of the comprehensive nature of what the counselors were doing so it was very positive for us I think it made us more comprehensive, it made us better, brought us into alignment, so it helped us out a lot.

**Individual Clusters and Themes**

Step 2 involved clustering and thematizing the relevant meaning units. During this step of the analysis, the researcher read each meaning unit of the experience and grouped or clustered similar meaning units together for each principal. These clusters were then associated with a specific thematic category. These clustered or grouped meaning units comprised the essential themes regarding the implementation of the ASCA
National Model for the principal. Table 5 presents segments of themes and meaning units for Ms. Judy.

**Individual Textural Descriptions**

In step 4, the researcher composed individual textural descriptions to describe each principal’s perspective regarding the implementation of the ASCA National Model in their school. These descriptions presented a verification of each principal’s own experience and illustrated images and rich descriptions of the actual process of implementing this model. To compose the individual textural descriptions, the researcher referred back to the principal’s unique themes and meaning units comprised of verbatim statements. In this step, each principal’s data were scrutinized to answer the question: what did each principal experience through the implementation of the ASCA National Model in their school? The textural descriptions consisted of statements that were relevant to the individual principal’s experience (actions, feelings, and thoughts) pertaining to the phenomenon being examined. For example, two of Mr. Dapper’s statements show that he considered the benefit to students when his school district initiated the impetus for implementation:

1. “A comprehensive counseling program would be delivered; a more purposeful program that would increase student achievement and assist students with better transition to adult life.”

2. Aiding students “in that transition to adult, that’s our purpose. To transition into adults, to be independent and if you’re not purposeful, then you are getting scattered effects, haphazard and happenstance.”
Table 5

*Ms. Judy Themes and Meaning Units*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Meaning Units</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Judy</td>
<td>Impetus</td>
<td>Well, it became a focus of the Director of Counseling for the county school system and it was very interesting because when she was a counselor before she was in that position at the county, she was not in a school where there was a comprehensive counseling model. So she was very taken with the ASCA model and because her school did not have that, wanted that model in all of the high schools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Drawbacks</td>
<td>You’re going to find this interesting, but what I really thought was the largest drawback was that our counseling department has been recognized in the local community for years for all they have done and when you look at the ASCA model it is really less than what our counselors do. So a drawback was that we are going to announce to the community this is what we do and we’re really doing so much more, but of course it was only our local community who realized all that we do for our students and so by receiving the award it let the rest of the county and our state and the nation know that we obviously have a very comprehensive model.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Internal Support</td>
<td>The assistant principal was supportive in the decision. My assistant principal that is responsible for curriculum and instruction had met with the counselors prior to me looking at the complete application they had completed and she worked with them in completing that application and making sure that everything was included and that all the data was correct. I think the fact that the counselors approached her with it first and the fact that she had gone completely through the application and knew that we really had all of those facades of it in place so that when they came to me they said look this indeed represents what we do but not everything we do. So of course in that that cuts through me wading through everything.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Complete support (from the school counselors). We have six counselors. They had all sat down and talked about the model, realized that there was nothing new for them to do. It was the huge packet that took quite a while to complete that was the biggest chore because as far really changing what we did or how we serviced the students there really was not a change. School counselors assisted in that they have a wonderful department and they have been doing that all along and they completed all of the report that we gave to be awarded that we were an ASCA model and also to be awarded the RAMP. Not only do they complete all the services described in the ASCA model, they also completed all of the paper work and everything that it took to be awarded that.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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</table>
Individual Structural Descriptions

In step 5, individual structural descriptions were composed for each principal. After delineating a textural description for each principal, a structural description was then developed. In order to develop a structural description, the researcher utilized imaginative variation. Moustakas (1994) defined the task of imaginative variation as: “To seek possible meanings through the utilization of imagination varying the frames of reference, employing polarities and reversals, and approaching the phenomenon from divergent perspectives, different positions, roles or functions” (pp. 97-98).

The researcher read the textural descriptions of each principal to compose individual structural descriptions. Individual structural descriptions were formulated by reflecting on the themes, meaning units, and how feelings and thoughts were connected to the phenomenon. The structural descriptions were comprised of the principal’s textural descriptions, staying as close as possible to the cited nature of the principal’s original descriptions, and relying heavily on the principal’s own words. Through imaginative variation, the researcher was able to develop an augmented account and seek all possible meaning of the principal’s experience. The structural descriptions showed for the first time interpretation of the principal’s words by the researcher. A portion of an excerpt from Ms. Judy is provided below to illustrate how the data were transformed.

Ms. Judy reported that the impetus to implement the ASCA National Model was initiated by the “Director of Counseling for the school system” and that the initiative was conveyed at a meeting attended by the school counselors working at her school. She stated that prior to assuming the Director of Counseling position, the Director had herself
been a school counselor. Ms. Judy felt that the Director of Counseling was initiating the implementation of this model because she liked the ASCA National Model and because when she was a school counselor her school did not implement a comprehensive counseling model.

Ms. Judy noted that when the school counselors introduced the ASCA National Model to her, she recognized that they had already implemented different components of the model in their school. She added that this realization led to the decision to implement the model in her school and to recognize the school counselors for providing the services outlined in the model.

To determine accuracy of the structural descriptions, the researcher mailed each principal’s transcript and structural descriptions to them. Each principal was asked to review the transcript and structural descriptions and provide the researcher with corrective feedback prior to the second interview. No principal provided corrective feedback prior to the second interview.

At the second interview, each principal was provided the opportunity to make corrections to his or her transcript and structural descriptions. All principals stated that they did not want to make any changes to their transcript or structural descriptions. All principals confirmed that the transcript and structural descriptions were an accurate synopsis of the first interview.

Textural-Structural Descriptions

In step 5 the textural-structural descriptions were composed for each principal. The textural-structural descriptions incorporated individual principal’s textural and
structural descriptions. The integration of the textural and structural descriptions allowed for the synthesis of the meaning and essence of the experience. These composite summary descriptions attempted to encapsulate the principals’ experiences of implementing the ASCA National Model in their schools by using verbatim quotes that reflect the principals’ experiences.

**Composite Textural-Structural Descriptions**

In step 6, the researcher reviewed the textural-structural descriptions from step 5. The textural-structural description and themes of each principal were analyzed in order to obtain an understanding of the experiences as a whole for the principals as a group. During this process, each principal’s themes were condensed into general themes. Reviewing these descriptions and condensing the themes allowed for the formulation of the composite textural-structural descriptions. These composite textural-structural descriptions were common to the majority or all of the principals. This composite description allowed for the understanding of the phenomenon from the perspective of the general rather than the specific details of the experience as reported by the principal. This composite textural-structural description conveyed the essence of the implementation of the ASCA National Model as described by high school principals who implemented this model in their school.

**Summary of Data Analysis**

This researcher used a phenomenological research design to analyze the data in this research study. This section provides insight into how the data analysis was done
and described how the themes were generated. The next section presents the major themes of this research study.

**Themes**

Phenomenological research seeks to illuminate the meaning and essence of a phenomenon by identifying the texture of the experience (conditions, situations, and context) and the structure of the experience (thoughts, feelings, and actions) related to the experience. The phenomenon under investigation in this research study was the implementation of the ASCA National Model by high school principals in their schools. The research questions that guided this study were: What was the experience of high school principals who successfully implemented the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) National Model? and What was the impetus for high school principals to implement this model in their schools?

During the composite textural-structural stage of analysis, seven dominant themes emerged. The collective themes among the principals included:

1. Impetus for Pursuing the Implementation of the ASCA National Model
2. Benefits of Implementation
3. Counseling Program Schools had in Place
4. Time Commitment
5. The Implementation Experience
6. Implementation Advocates
7. Advice to Peers
Theme 1: Impetus for Pursuing the Implementation of the ASCA National Model

One of the main themes encountered was that the impetus to implement the ASCA National Model was either initiated by the school district or school counselor working in the school. Four of the six principals reported that the impetus to implement the ASCA National Model was generated at the school district level and two principals stated that a school counselor working in their schools presented the idea to them. All principals indicated that they were agreeable to implementing the ASCA National Model regardless of where the momentum was generated. They all conveyed that they thought it was a good idea, made sense, and were pleased that the ASCA National Model was being implemented in their school.

Mr. Jackson reported that “for over 10 years” his school district had been emphasizing the importance and supporting school’s decision to implement the ASCA National Model. He added that, for a similar period of time, the school district had also been promoting the idea of schools attaining the RAMP status. Mr. Jackson pointed out that even though the school district had been encouraging the implementation of this model for many years, this is the first time his school considered its implementation. He commented that the Dean of Students, who is a school counselor in his school, introduced the topic of implementing the ASCA National Model and he was “delighted” they were “moving in that direction.”

Similar to Mr. Jackson, Mr. Dapper indicated that his school district created the impetus for the implementation of this model in his school. He explained that the school district is a “huge entity of bureaucratic departments that drive the different models of
student growth, teacher preparedness, principal preparedness, support, and resources.”

He noted that his school district is “always trying to enhance” and “support” services offered to students. They do this by staying involved with schools in their district, and by interacting with other school districts. According to Mr. Dapper, by interacting with other school districts, his school district recognizes different ways they can improve and expand services. He went on to say that he thinks that this realization is one of the reasons why they “pushed this out to the counselors and principals.” However, “it sounded like a good model to have” at his school.

Like Mr. Jackson and Mr. Dapper, Mr. Jim pointed out that the impetus to implement the ASCA National Model was driven by the school district, specifically by the superintendent. He continued, it “did not originate in my office or from our school improvement team. It originated from our district level school improvement team. It came from our superintendent.” He noted that even though the superintendent created the drive for the implementation of this model, the proposal was “more than likely” generated by someone on the superintendent’s team. Mr. Jim felt that this person was likely encouraging the superintendent to put forth the request and highlight the importance of implementation to principals and school counselors. He elaborated that regardless of where the idea was created, since the superintendent was expressing the importance of the ASCA National Model being implemented, principals and school counselors implemented the model. He speculated that if the superintendent had not been “standing as firmly and strongly” behind its implementation, he is unsure if schools
would have implemented the model and sought the recognition as a RAMP school recipient.

Ms. Judy also indicated that the impetus to implement the ASCA National Model originated at the district level. According to Ms. Judy, the Director of Counseling for the school district was “taken with the ASCA National Model.” She reported:

It was very interesting, because when she was a counselor before she was in that position at the county, she was not in a school where there was a comprehensive counseling model. So she was very taken with the ASCA model, and because her school did not have that, she wanted that model in all of the high schools.

She explained that when the school counselors showed her the ASCA National Model, they “could check off that we were doing all of these things, then of course it only made sense” to implement the model.

Two principals reported that one of the school counselors working in their school presented to them the idea of implementing the ASCA National Model. Mr. Raider stated that one of the school counselors brought the idea of implementing the ASCA National Model to him. He went on to say that:

For a high school principal, your counselors are like your right arm. You got your assistant principals, you got your counselors, and they are my cabinet; and so those people I trust tremendously and give them the autonomy to make decisions. Obviously, I will have to say the final yes, but I don’t automatically doubt them when they are doing things or bringing initiatives and programs to me because the team that I have, fortunately I know that they are striving to make this school a
better school and to serve our children. It was because the trust was there. I was sold even without having to go into the depths of the details and the nuts and bolts of it.

Mr. Sixth shared a similar response. He indicated that the “director of guidance,” who is a school counselor in their school, informed him about the ASCA National Model and advocated for its implementation.

Each principal verbalized where the impetus for implementing the ASCA National Model originated. Regardless of the source of the impetus for implementation, all principals were delighted to implement the ASCA National Model.

**Theme 2: Benefits of Implementation**

Though the researcher separated out this second theme, it is connected with the first theme (impetus for pursuing the implementation of the ASCA National Model). An exploration of the first theme revealed the second theme: that when the suggestion of implementing the model was presented to principals, one of the first things they thought about was the benefit of implementing it in their schools. Recalling the momentum and decision to implement the ASCA National Model, principals offered examples of the benefits they considered, resulting in two subthemes: (a) internal benefits, and (b) external benefits. This section provides verbatim responses given by the principals.

**Internal benefits.** Mr. Jackson, Mr. Dapper, Mr. Jim, and Mr. Sixth spoke about the internal benefits of implementing the ASCA National Model in their schools. All of them stated that they considered the model to be beneficial to students by improving the delivery of services offered and being more responsive to their needs. Mr. Jackson
acknowledged that implementation “would make us more streamlined, more focused, and more data driven.” Mr. Dapper said that the ASCA National Model is “a more purposeful program that would increase student achievement and assist students with better transition to adult life.” He pointed out that the more he discussed the model with his school counselor, the more he “started to get a picture . . . I know what else I can do now and I know what kind of training we may need.”

**External benefits.** Principals reported that they took into consideration that through the implementation of the ASCA National Model, parents and the community could become more engaged in what is going on with the school. For example, Mr. Dapper indicated that he reflected on how to connect with parents and the community through the implementation of this model. He noted that implementation could “promote parental involvement, . . . increase accessing governmental and community resources and services. Mr. Sixth expressed that he considered the “four-year plan” and also:

The outreach to families and trying to get the families in for the four-year plan, and the junior meetings, and senior meetings, and stuff like that. So, anything that’s going to get them (the school counselors) out in the community a bit more is better. You know it doesn’t have to be like it was when I went to high school.

Ms. Judy stated that looking at the “community’s need (to) see if what is in the ASCA model would indeed better serve students” was an important aspect of their implementation decision.

Principals also indicated that because they were conscious of the recognition their schools had received from the community in the past, they considered the increased status
that the ASCA National Model would bring to their school. Mr. Raider stated, “I thought it would be a great recognition as well as an identity for the school.” He further articulated that:

Anytime you have a program that’s nationally recognized as being effective and enhancing our best practices as a school, that was the motivation I needed to bring that type of label and identity to our school to be known as an ASCA Model school. That was it. I said that’s one of the things we want to be recognized or known for.

Mr. Jackson also acknowledged the importance of community recognition. He expressed:

Just from the PR (public relations) value I think that it sends a strong message to the community when you can say that as professionals you have attained certification, recognition on a national level for what you are doing and I thought that would send a strong message to our community, to the teachers, and of course the parents.

Similarly, Ms. Judy stated that the benefit she considered “was really just the recognition of what we were doing and had been doing for years and by receiving the RAMP award or the recognition that we completed that model and gave our counselors recognition.”

Principals expressed that they reflected on the benefits of the ASCA National Model when they were considering its implementation in their school. Principals believe that parental and community involvement is important and considered how this model
could engage these two groups. Principals also thought about the positive recognition the
ASCA National Model would bring to their school since this program is nationally
accepted.

**Theme 3: Counseling Program Schools Had in Place**

The third main theme revealed the type of counseling program the schools had in
place prior to implementing the ASCA National Model. All principals reported that their
schools had some pieces of a comprehensive school counseling program already in place
prior to implementing the ASCA National Model. However, these pieces did not add up
to a program that could be described as comprehensive. For example, Mr. Jackson
recalled:

> In this district we had gone from a model that was called *guidance and the
guidance counselor* to what we call *student services*, which is multifaceted and
was intended to do many things and provide many services to students and to
teachers. Depending upon how you define comprehensive, based on the ASCA
model . . . it was not aligned with the goals and objective of the school; it was not
as focused as it needed to be; it was not data driven. So I do not feel that before
ASCA it was comprehensive.

Mr. Raider provided a similar response. He expressed that his school:

> Had a counseling department that served the needs of all our high school students
both academically and as well as mentally. Helping our high school students to
navigate through course selection options . . . they were instrumental also with our
scholarships for our students going to college and were involved in guiding
students with regards to standardized testing, ACT, and SAT.

Similarly, Mr. Dapper reported that prior to the implementation of the ASCA
National Model, the counseling program at his school “was just meant to address the
needs of students and it did not include all students nor did it include data.” Perhaps Mr.
Jim articulated this most clearly when he shared that in his school the counseling program
they had in place prior to implementing the ASCA National Model “didn’t really have a
name to it like this does.” He continued,

   We didn’t have that industry standard that I think RAMP does or ASCA . . . We
were doing all those things but we were doing them in an unconfined fashion, so
to speak. So, this kind of gave us a stamp of certification without a better way of
putting it. So, we did the kinds of things that you can find in what ASCA has
asked our guidance counselor to do. We just didn’t operate up under a model.”

He further explained,

   We did a lot of things that ASCA was doing but we didn’t know we were doing
their model because we didn’t know anything about their model. But when we
started getting into the work, we were like, “Oh yeah we have that, we have that,
we have evidence of this, we have evidence of that, let’s keep going.”

Mr. Sixth described his school’s program as an “average guidance program.” He
shared that the school counselors “focused on scheduling kids; they focused on looking at
colleges for the kids and any little crisis management that may have popped up.”

However, his school counseling program was not comprehensive in scope.
By contrast, Ms. Judy was the only principal who reported that her school had “a comprehensive counseling program” in place prior to ASCA implementation. She said she “was very fortunate that there was a comprehensive counseling program when I came here as a counselor in 1988. So, it is longstanding. We have improved it to meet the student’s needs every year.”

The data organized under this third main theme (counseling program schools had in place) illuminated a subtheme: the fact that the counseling programs that were in place were primarily non-data driven.

**Data and non-data driven.** Only one principal articulated that the counseling programs that were in place at her school were data driven. Ms. Judy said, “Every year we sat down and looked at our activities, looked at our goals, looked at what our students were saying they wanted to do and just kept improving the comprehensive model we had.” On the other hand, three principals reported that the counseling program their schools had in place was not driven by data. For example, Mr. Jim explained,

The piece that kind of stood out to us (was that) in order to gain (ASCA) certification there has to be a certain level of student data that drives the decision making and that was the piece we were missing up under the non-model framework.

Mr. Jim recognized that having school counselors use student data to make decisions was a benefit of ASCA National Model. He elaborated:

We were data driven in a lot of other areas of the school, but the guidance department was not using student level data. So, we found out immediately that
was the benefit (of the ASCA model). The decisions that we were going to be making as long as we operated up under this model were going to be driven largely by data.

Similar to Mr. Jim, Mr. Jackson also conveyed that his school counseling program “was not data driven.” Mr. Dapper, like Mr. Jim and Mr. Jackson, disclosed that the counseling program his school had in place did not include data. He remarked,

In order to improve counseling you have to learn not only how to collect the data, but how to use the data as a drive for counseling. We talked about using data as driving instruction. One of the things that we increasingly talked about here is performance tasks. As a counselor there is a performance task that is created. That can easily be measured just like a lesson plan. So, that’s what we learned. Again, using the data driven model. How can data drive instruction? How can data drive good counseling? That was the question that was pushed forward.

In describing the counseling program their schools had in place prior to the impetus to implement the ASCA National Model, all but one principal indicated that their school had pieces of a comprehensive school counseling program in place. The principals also reported whether the counseling program at their school was driven or not driven by data. The responses by the principals indicated that being aware of the counseling program their school had in place assisted them in making a decision on whether or not to implement the ASCA National Model.
Theme 4: Time Commitment

The fourth main theme that emerged from the findings was the amount of time it took to implement the ASCA National Model. Principals concurred that implementing the ASCA National Model required a commitment of time. Mr. Jackson described the process of implementation as a “journey.” He indicated that it was a good journey that lasted approximately a year and-a-half. Mr. Dapper noted, and others echoed, that it is “important to understand the amount of time it takes.” He continued, “This is not going to be done in a year.” Ms. Judy expressed that they “worked on it for most of the year.” She shared that her school’s process took a “shorter period of time” because when they “went through the model” they realized that they already had most of the model in place. Mr. Jim explained that “with the amount of time that it took, it took a toll on our staff.” He reported that

It (took) almost all year. It took even more than that. It took some summertime work. If I were to have a counselor sitting in right here they would probably correct me and say no, Mr. Principal, we worked on it longer than you thought we did. I’m talking about at home.

Mr. Jim spoke about the need to have meetings with the school counselors in an attempt to manage completion time. Mr. Jim disclosed that he had to “light a fire up under some people” and “patch up some folks’ feelings.” He further revealed that “there were times in which I questioned aloud to our superintendent, to our director of students, is this going to be worth it in the end?” Mr. Jim concluded that implementing the ASCA National Model “was worth it.”
As described above, the principals imparted the message that implementing the ASCA National Model requires a commitment of time. They also reported that being aware of this time commitment is important in terms of how it will impact the school counselors. However, the principals reported that implementation of this model was worth the time and effort.

Theme 5: The Implementation Experience

The fifth main theme that emerged was the experience principals had with the implementation of the ASCA National Model. Recalling the experience with implementing this Model, principals’ discussion of what had contributed to their positive experience, resulted in two subthemes: (a) school counselors were the primary implementers of the ASCA National Model, and (b) the importance of communication. In describing this experience, it was clear that principals had a sense of appreciation, awareness, and respect regarding the competency of their school counselors and the process of implementation. This section provides principals’ verbatim statements portraying their experience with the implementation of the ASCA National Model.

School counselors were the primary implementers of the ASCA National Model. All principals stated that their school counselors were the ones who did the work required to implement the ASCA National Model. Most of the principals reported that the school counselors were receptive and excited about implementing this model in their schools. However, two principals noted that one of the counselors on their school counseling team was apathetic about its implementation.
Mr. Jackson conveyed that when the Dean of Students, who is a school counselor at their school, introduced the “subject” of implementation to him, he was delighted that they “were moving in that direction.” However, he “wanted to see what the consensus was of the six-member department.” He noted that “as a group, they said they were ready to undertake the task. They did it; the counselors are a team.” He further expressed that “the experience was positive.”

Mr. Raider also asserted that the school counselors “did it . . . they did everything.” He also said that it was “seamless, smooth, didn’t have any road blocks or any barriers. The fidelity of the implementation was just incredible. It wasn’t a situation where we say, ‘Oh we’re going through this application implementation process.’“

Mr. Dapper echoed a similar sentiment. He indicated that the experience was “very positive, very direct in the sense that I was aware of it from day one, when (the counselor) brought it to me, (and) kept me abreast of the progress.” Ms. Judy also described her experience with the implementation of this model as “very good.” She indicated that when the school counselors brought the idea of implementation to her, she recognized that they had already implemented different components of the model in their school. She added that this realization led to the decision to implement the model in her school and to recognize the school counselors for providing the services outlined in the model. She continued, “We have six counselors. They had all sat down and talked about the model (and) realized that there was nothing new for them to do.”

Mr. Sixth and Mr. Jim were the only two principals who discussed receiving resistance from one of their school counselors regarding implementing the ASCA
Mr. Sixth articulated that the overall experience of implementing this model was “fine.”

We have five school counselors and there’s only one who’s of my age bracket. Everybody else is in their late twenties, early thirties. The one who is close to my age I got some resistance from her; change is hard for her.

Mr. Jim shared that “when the superintendent presented the idea to implement the ASCA National Model” in their school district he talked with the school counselors. He revealed that “we talked about it; they did it because they had to but complained during the entire process.” He went on to say that one of the school counselors “who was closest to retirement, retired during the process. I got the most resistance from her.” He continued:

I’m probably going to use too strong of a word when I say this, but our folks felt a sense of relief when this was over with, but they were also resentful. They really were and it’s kind of like—I’m going to use a crazy analogy here. I went to college with folks who joined a fraternity, and they were treated so harshly as a pledge before they became a brother that by the time they gained membership into this secret organization, they hated everybody that was in it. You understand what I’m saying, so now they are part of a brotherhood that they don’t even like. This (ASCA implementation) got done but they resented so many people: they resented me, they resented the superintendent, (and) they resented themselves.

**Importance of communication.** Most of the principals revealed that they wanted the implementation of the ASCA National Model in their school to be seamless, and they
kept that goal in mind during the implementation process. Mr. Jackson stated that he accomplished this goal by communicating with the teachers in “school improvement” meetings, and by establishing an advisory committee, which included parents. He indicated that by doing this “our school improvement team (became) aware of it” and this helped with communicating to the “entire faculty the comprehensive nature of what the counselors were doing.” Mr. Jackson also pointed out that he approached discussions by emphasizing that the implementation of the ASCA National Model was part of the overall goal of the continual enhancement of services offered to students, that “there would be a benefit to students,” and that “we had a commitment” to its implementation. Mr. Jackson further articulated that he did not want the implementation of this model “to have the appearance that something different was being overlaid on what we were already doing.” So, he did not approach its implementation as a way of “reinventing ourselves.” He approached it as “we are just improving” and this is part of the “continuous improvement.” According to Mr. Jackson, taking these steps resulted in the positive implementation of the ASCA National Model.

Mr. Dapper also acknowledged the importance of communicating with the teachers about the implementation of the ASCA National Model. He reported that he “was upfront and transparent about what was happening” and asked the teachers to “collaborate” with the school counselor. He continued, “Making sure there was collaboration was the first thing.” Mr. Dapper also noted that he highlighted how this model would impact and address “the overarching purpose of the school,” “be an asset to teachers,” and be of benefit to students. Mr. Dapper indicated that by having conversations about the ASCA National Model, and
discussing the roles of the school counselor and teachers in its implementation, led to a better understanding and acceptance of its implementation.

Similar to Mr. Jackson and Mr. Dapper, Ms. Judy concurred that she communicated with the teachers about the implementation of the ASCA National Model, and discussed ways they would be involved with its implementation. She also shared that “the assistant principal and the chair of the guidance department helped with informing all the department chairs” by sending out a report telling them about the model and how “comprehensive all the services are” that were being offered by the school counseling department.

According to Ms. Judy, they “involved (their) teachers directly through (their) advisement system which is done through the guidance department.” She continued, “Believe it or not, we meet individually with every student, and every parent of 2,730 students.” She was animated when sharing that “we have to have the support of the homeroom teachers, and it’s wonderful because then it lets the homeroom teachers know about how comprehensive our guidance is.” Ms. Judy concluded by saying:

The entire school, simply from what I said before about the advisement system, about teachers giving referrals, we have teacher committees for making decisions based on what classroom guidance we’re going to give. So really, if not every teacher, then a representation of all the different factions of the school from teachers, counselors, administrators, everyone. Everyone worked together on it.

Mr. Jim acknowledged that he did not do a good job of communicating to the teachers about the ASCA National Model, its implementation, and their role with its implementation. He reported, “We talked about it in leadership. We just kind of
informed everybody: ‘let me tell you what the counselors are doing.’” He stated that he shared with the teachers some of the benefits of the ASCA National Model and “outlined (how) it’s supposed to provide us with these additional benefits.” Mr. Jim recognized that due to the lack of communication, the teachers were “basically informed but they didn’t do anything in the way of support.” He continued, “Our teachers and other faculty and staff just kind of rocked along not necessarily even knowing that this was being constructed. Obviously they had to be able to provide (the) counselors with whatever data” they needed.

Mr. Jim emphasized that not having a discussion with teachers about the ASCA National Model, their role, and the school counselors’ role regarding its implementation, resulted in the school counselors not receiving much support, which caused them to feel “stressed out.” He shared that he regretted not “engaging more people in the process.” He concluded, “Hind sight being 20/20, we would have involved teachers more to kind of help carry the flag.”

Each principal discussed their experience with implementing the ASCA National Model in their school. Whereas each principal’s experience was unique, communication emerged as a theme because it was so clearly important to every implementation of the ASCA Model. In general, principals conveyed a positive experience regarding the implementation of the ASCA National Model in their schools. Principals uniformly agreed that their school counselors were the primary implementers of the model. They also talked about the importance of communicating with staff about their role in implementing the ASCA National Model.
Theme 6: Implementation Advocates

The sixth main theme that emerged underscored the advocates during the implementation of the ASCA National Model. In discussing their experience with the implementation of this model, principals revealed the roles of the assistant principal, teachers, superintendent, and the Board of Education members during the implementation process. As the researcher further examined this theme, it was evident that two subthemes, internal advocates and external advocates, surfaced. Each subtheme provides a greater understanding of the support received during the implementation of the ASCA National Model.

Internal advocates. Principals indicated that their assistant principals offered some support during the implementation of the ASCA National Model in their school. This support included providing approval, data, and encouragement, facilitating discussions, and soothing anxiety. For instance, Mr. Jackson stated that the administrative team met regularly with the school counselors, and that they “worked together as a team.” Even so, he acknowledged that he and the other administrators “were not hands-on” working through the implementation process, but “were supportive in any way that we could be.” Mr. Jackson further explained that they provided help and “any kind of assistance that we might lend to that process, but mostly just in encouragement and understanding the process and trying to facilitate it whenever we could.” He noted that the assistant principal is their “data manager.” For that reason, the assistant principal was available to the “counselors in terms of providing data, helping them with data and that kind of thing.”
Mr. Dapper provided a similar response. He emphasized that his assistant principal is a “data person.” He further explained that, at times, she “would sit in on discussions, and if she needed to, (she would) remind me of something that we did not do or something we got or didn’t get” related to the data we needed that is required as part of the model. He expressed that the assistant principal provided “110% support” in terms of making sure that they had the data they needed, and impart overall appreciation for the implementation of the ASCA National Model.

Ms. Judy explained that the assistant principal offered endorsement for the implementation of the ASCA National Model. She reported that “the counselors approached her with it first” and explained to her the different components of the model. After becoming aware of the model, she knew that “we really had all of those facets of it in place.” Consequently, the assistant principal recommended that the school counselors converse “with me about the model.”

Mr. Jim noted that the assistant principal for instruction (API) provided emotional support to the school counselors by listening to their concerns. He indicated that she served as a mediator between himself and the school counselors. For example, he shared:

Our guidance folks actually operate up under our API. A lot of the feedback that I got on this process actually funneled itself through that API. So, that’s the support that she gave most was she listened to them, their concerns, their gripes, their complaints, their crying, whatever and then she would synthesize and manage all that information and then bring it all to me.
He continued, “Now that didn’t stop the counselors from coming in here and meeting with me.” He further noted that a lot of times if the school counselors had a concern, and he was “tied up, they are obviously going to go straight to her.” Mr. Jim indicated that having a supportive assistant principal provided the school counselors an alternative to meeting with him. He recognized and stated, “That’s where the assistant principal probably came in best.”

Mr. Raider said that their assistant principal offered “acceptance,” “approval,” and “support.” Similarly, Mr. Sixth reported that their assistant principal offered “support.” Additionally, he expressed that “we weren’t asked to do anything. It was all done through guidance; it wasn’t done through us.”

All principals emphasized that teachers were verbally supportive regarding the implementation of the ASCA National Model in their school. However, most of the principals reported that they did not receive any hands-on support from teachers with its implementation. They all indicated that teachers were not directly asked to assist with the implementation of the ASCA National Model. For example, Mr. Dapper reported that the teachers in his school said that “we think that it is a good idea” to implement the ASCA National Model and “we are glad” that the school counselor is willing to implement it. “If you need us to do anything let us know.” He continued, “Everyone bought into it and they were 100% supportive.” Mr. Jackson and Mr. Sixth also acknowledged and stated that “everyone was supportive” but they did not do a great deal to assist the school counselors with its implementation. Mr. Raider noted that his
teachers offered “acceptance, approval of it . . . that’s really it.” Mr. Jim was the only principal who noted that the teachers did “nothing, really.” He clarified that:

Our teachers and other faculty and staff just kind of rocked along not necessarily even knowing that this was being constructed. We talked about it in leadership. We just kind of informed everybody: “Let me tell you what the counselors are doing . . .” So, they were basically informed but they didn’t do anything in the way of support . . . obviously they had to be able to provide counselors with whatever data. I’m sure they had to get pieces of evidence from teachers . . . but no direct support.

Ms. Judy is the only principal who reported that the teachers provided direct support with the implementation of the ASCA National Model. She stated that this was done by involving “our teachers directly with our advisement system which is done through the guidance department.” She further stated,

We have teacher committees for making decisions based on what classroom guidance we’re going to give. So, really, if not every teacher, then a representation of all the different factions of the school from teachers, counselors, administrators, everyone. Everyone worked together on it.

**External advocates.** Principals stated that they did not receive any direct support from the superintendent when implementing the ASCA National Model in their schools. Mr. Jackson reported that “the superintendent and Board of Education were non-factors.” He expounded on his answer by stating that:
Let’s just assume that the superintendent had authorized this by the actions of our district office in student services, because again, that was where the emphasis came from and information to all of the deans so that they would have knowledge of it and help them with it; schools that had gone through the process, being a model for other schools who were implementing it. So, the superintendent was aware of that, but there never was any direct communication from the superintendent about it.

Mr. Jim also pointed out that he received “no direct support” with the implementation of this model. However, “it was his idea at a higher level.”

Mr. Dapper explained that:

The superintendent does not directly have an effect in most schools. They are the draw of compliance. They are the draw of planning—district planning. They have people to help gather data. We have technological systems that you can record data and they review that. If there are issues that need to be addressed, I may, very rarely, get a phone call from our Chief of Schools . . . so we put data in, we’re going to give them reports, we’re going to tell them what’s happening; they generated the idea. There was no direct support.

Ms. Judy had a similar response. She indicated that:

The superintendent directly did nothing. Indirectly he gives us the number of counselors we have which allows us to have this comprehensive model. Indirectly he employs that person, which is the Director of Guidance Counselors across the county, but as far as directly meeting with him, I did not do that.
Mr. Raider also noted, “I never talked with her.” Mr. Sixth reported that the superintendent “knew about it . . . was in favor of it . . . but did not have a direct hand in it.”

All principals emphasized that they did not receive any outspoken support from the Board of Education members regarding the implementation of the ASCA National Model. Ms. Judy clarified that she was aware that they had supported other schools by recognizing them for implementing the ASCA National Model in their school. She pointed out, “We knew that we were doing more, and if we did not go with the model then they seemed to be unaware of what we were doing. It made sense to go with the model so that they knew.” Mr. Sixth stated, “I think they were supportive of it, but I don’t think they did anything beyond being supportive.”

Principals described the support received while implementing the ASCA National Model in their schools. Support ranged from hands-on support to no direct support at all, with degrees of acceptance, appreciation, and encouragement on the continuum in between. Overall, the responses demonstrate that assistant principals, teachers, superintendents, and school board members are uniquely suited to provide support with the implementation of this model.

**Theme 7: Advice to Peers**

The seventh and final theme is advice principals would offer their peers regarding the implementation of the ASCA National Model. Five of the six principals provided advice for their peers. However, most of the advice differed from principal to principal. For example, Mr. Jackson stated that he would encourage principals to “trust the
counselors,” “delegate responsibilities,” and “communicate with them on an ongoing basis.” He explained that trusting the team “to do what they need to do” is not only essential when implementing the ASCA National Model but is imperative in “many areas of the school and management.” Additionally, Mr. Jackson recognized that he was excessively hands-off and now wishes that he had not been. He said that the school counselors were “pretty much driving the entire process and I was hands-off and letting them do it.” He added that he regretted not “directing them as to these are some things I would like for you to look at.” He felt that if he had done this, he would have had “more data” and be “more on top of the data . . . in terms of measuring the goals and looking at the outcomes that we were trying to reach.”

Mr. Raider suggested:

Do your homework so that you will be fully aware (of the model), and then make sure it is something that your stakeholders, leadership team, staff, and parents have truly bought into. You want to be as transparent as possible because, you know, there are so many people who have ownership of a school. It belongs to so many stakeholders. To keep that partnership with those stakeholders healthy you want to make sure they are in the know about changes or additions. The more they know on the front end the easier the buy in.

Similarly, Ms. Judy expressed:

Look at the model . . . look at the students’ needs, the community’s needs, and see if what is in the ASCA model (that) would indeed better serve their students. I say that because every school’s culture is different; every school’s needs would be
different . . . If their guidance program does not align with it, they need to check to see that their guidance program really meets their students’ needs and if their program does a better job then they should stay with what they’re doing, but at least they’ve been exposed to a national model that is very good.

Mr. Dapper offered three suggestions for his peers to consider if they are thinking about implementing the ASCA National: “Understand the amount of time it takes; accept the part that you have to play in supporting the person implementing the ASCA Model . . . and be transparent about what it means to the overall arching purpose of the school.”

Mr. Jim had a similar recommendation for peers regarding the amount of time it takes to implement this model. He articulated that the implementation process “is a marathon; it is not a sprint.” He conceded that he did not utilize the entire staff in the implementation process and would suggest to others “to engage more people in this process.” As mentioned above, he further noted, “Hind sight being 20/20 we would have involved teachers more to kind of help carry the flag a little bit.” Mr. Sixth was the only principal who did not have any recommendations for peers. He expressed that “if you asked me what implementation entailed, I couldn’t tell you. It all went fine.”

**Summary**

This chapter presented the research findings from the phenomenological study on the implementation of the ASCA National Model by high school principal their schools. The data revealed that there is a commonality amongst principals regarding the impetus for implementation and their experiences while doing so. These commonalities were expressed in seven themes: (a) impetus for pursuing the implementation of the ASCA
National Model, (b) benefits of implementation, (c) counseling program schools had in place, (d) time commitment, (e) the implementation experience, (f) implementation advocates, and (g) advice to peers. There was evidence that these seven common themes were the fundamental characteristics of the implementation experience.

The ensuing chapter provides a discussion of the research results. The results are discussed in relation to the existing literature, and introduced as contributions to the profession.
CHAPTER IV
DISCUSSION

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to investigate the implementation of the ASCA National Model by high school principals in their schools. The questions that guided the current research were:

- What was the experience of high school principals who successfully implemented the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) National Model?
- What was the impetus for high school principals to implement this model in their schools?

As presented in the previous chapter, a common experience amongst principals emerged regarding the impetus for implementing and their experience while implementing this model in their schools. The following seven themes were identified in data analysis: (a) impetus for pursuing the implementation of the ASCA National Model, (b) benefits of implementation, (c) counseling program schools had in place, (d) time commitment, (e) the implementation experience, (f) implementation advocates, and (g) advice to peers.

There was evidence that these seven themes were the fundamental characteristics of the implementation experience.

Each of these themes that were identified in the data analysis is further explored and discussed in relation to existing literature. The purpose of this exploration is not to review the supporting data of each theme or repeat principals’ quotes, but rather to summarize and discuss the information garnered from principals with regards to existing
literature. Merriam (2002) indicated that the value of qualitative research increases when the findings of the study are placed in conjunction with existing literature, which is what the following section aims to do.

This chapter explores (a) the themes in relationship with current literature and new findings; (b) implications of this study regarding its application to school counselors, principals, and training programs; (c) recommendations for future research; and (d) limitations and delimitations of the current study.

**Impetus for Pursuing the Implementation of the ASCA National Model**

Though no previous published research was found that addressed the impetus for pursuing the implementation of the ASCA National Model, Gysbers (2006) stated that “strong leadership at the state level is a key to developing effective and accountable comprehensive guidance and counseling programs at the local level” (p. 247). Gysbers continued that “school counselors can and do influence practice” (p. 247). Furthermore, Gysbers and Henderson (2000) noted that the idea to put into practice a comprehensive guidance program in schools can come from anyone including school counselors, administrators, teachers, parents, students, and the school board.

Four of the six principals in the current study indicated that the impetus to implement the ASCA National Model was initiated by the school district, and two reported that a school counselor working in their school presented the idea to them. All principals expressed that they were agreeable to implementing the ASCA National Model regardless of where the momentum was generated. They all conveyed that they thought it was a good idea, made sense, and were pleased that the ASCA National Model was
being implemented in their school. A case in point, Mr. Jim stated that the impetus “did not originate in my office or from our school improvement team. It originated from our district level school improvement team. It came from our superintendent.” Similarly, Mr. Jackson, Mr. Dapper, and Ms. Judy reported the momentum for implementation was generated at the district level. Mr. Raider and Mr. Sixth indicated that a school counselor in their school informed them about the ASCA National Model, and advocated for its implementation. Thus, the findings of this researcher illustrate Gysbers and Henderson’s (2000) point that the idea to put into practice a comprehensive guidance program in schools can come from anyone.

**Principals Considered the Benefits of Implementation**

As discussed in Chapter 3, this second theme is connected to the first theme, impetus for pursuing the implementation of the ASCA National Model. Principals reported that regardless of where the impetus for implementation of the ASCA National Model was originally engendered, they considered the internal and external benefits of implementation. For example, Mr. Jackson, Mr. Dapper, Mr. Jim, and Mr. Sixth reported that the internal benefit they considered was that the model would be valuable to students through enhancing the delivery of services offered, and being more receptive to their needs. Mr. Dapper elaborated that the ASCA National Model is “a more purposeful program that would increase student achievement and assist students with better transition to adult life.”

An external benefit considered by principals was that through the implementation of the ASCA National Model, parents and the community could become more engaged in
what was going on with the school. For instance, Mr. Dapper indicated that he reflected on how to connect with parents and the community through the implementation of this model. He noted that implementation could “promote parental involvement, . . . increase accessing governmental and community resources and services.” He also acknowledged that “a more purposeful program would increase student achievement and assist students with better transition to adult life.” Mr. Sixth expressed that he considered “the outreach to families and trying to get the families in for the four-year plan, and the junior meetings, and senior meetings.”

Some of the benefits considered by principals in the current study are similar to those Dahir and Stone (2012) identified as benefits of implementing a comprehensive school counseling program. They include parents’: (a) partnership with school counselors regarding their children’s learning and career goals, (b) participation in educational and informational sessions, and (c) participation in ongoing communication between teacher, administrators, and school counselor (p. 21). Benefits for students encompass: (a) acquiring attitudes, knowledge, and skills in the three counseling domains: academic, career, and personal/social as a result of participating in a school counseling program; (b) participating in a rigorous academic curriculum; and (3) having equitable access to all educational opportunities (p. 21). Benefits for community members consist of (a) connecting with school stakeholders and students who affect community well being and workforce; (b) encouraging students to take pride in their community; and (c) showing community support, commitment to, and involvement in school improvement (p. 23).
Most of the principals in this study indicated that the impetus to implement this model was generated using a top-down approach (school district to individual schools). For example, four principals reported that the impetus to implement this model started at the district level. However, school counselors are in a position to influence the decision to implement this model in their school. For instance, two principals reported that the school counselor generated the idea to implement the ASCA National Model. Regardless of where the impetus was generated, all principals stated that when the impetus for implementation was being discussed, they considered how the model would benefit and improve services to students.

The researcher’s interpretation of this finding is that principals were less focused on where the idea originated and more concerned about whether or not this model would be beneficial to students when the momentum for implementation was being engendered. Based on the above interpretation of these finding, it is important for principals to know how the ASCA National Model will promote and enhance the academic, career, and personal/social development of all students. ASCA (2012) stated that a fully implemented comprehensive School Counseling Program ensures that all students have equal access to opportunities, rigorous curriculum, and the opportunity to fully participate in their educational process. It also makes certain that every student acquires the competencies to achieve success in school and life. Lapan et al. (1997) published the results from their study which showed that students who attended a school that had a comprehensive school counseling program reported that they earned higher grades, believed that career and college information was available to them, felt better prepared
for the future, and felt a sense of safety and belonging at school. Similarly, Lapan et al. (2003) reported that seventh grade students who attended a school which had a comprehensive school counseling program reported that they felt safe at school, were satisfied with their education, earned higher grades, had a better relationship with their teachers, and felt that their education had significant worth and value toward their future.

Counseling Program Schools Had in Place

No literature was encountered that addressed the counseling program schools had in place prior to the impetus for implementing the ASCA National Model in their school. The design of this research study and the open-ended questions asked by the researcher provided the forum for principals to describe the counseling program their schools had in place. Most of the principals reported that their school had pieces of a comprehensive school counseling program in place; only one principal indicated that her school had a comprehensive counseling program. For example, Mr. Jim disclosed that in his school the counseling program they had “didn’t really have a name to it like this does.” He continued, “We didn’t have that industry standard that I think RAMP does or ASCA does . . . We were doing all those things but we were doing them in an unconfined fashion, so to speak.” Ms. Judy reported that her school had “a comprehensive counseling program.” She indicated that she “was very fortunate that there was a comprehensive counseling program” prior to her arrival, and described it as “longstanding” because it was in place when she arrived “as a counselor in 1988.” She concluded, “We have improved it to meet the student’s needs every year.”
Based on the results, the researcher reflected on the idea that it may have been advantageous for principals to implement the ASCA National Model since their schools already had pieces of the model in place. No principal discussed needing any additional resources that were not already available in their school. For example, no principal reported that they needed to hire additional school counselors based on the student-to-counselor ratio outlined in the model. The ASCA National Model (2012) recommends a school counselor-to-student ratio of 1:250. The researcher wonders if principals would have been discouraged on the subject of implementing the ASCA National Model if implementation entailed hiring additional school counselors which would increase their overall school budget.

The subtheme that emerged under this third theme (counseling program schools had in place) illustrated that these schools had counseling programs that were primarily non data-driven. For example, Mr. Jim indicated that having school counselors use student data to make decisions was a benefit of the ASCA National Model. He stated that “we were data-driven in a lot of other areas of the school, but the guidance department was not using student-level data. So, with that being said, we found out immediately that was the benefit.” Similar to Mr. Jim, Mr. Jackson and Mr. Dapper conveyed that their school counseling program “was not data-driven.” Mr. Dapper remarked, “In order to improve counseling you have to learn not only how to collect the data, but how to use the data as a drive for counseling.”

The ASCA National Model (2005) suggested that it is important for school counselors to use data to demonstrate the success or weakness of the school counseling
program. The ASCA also describes the use of data as an “accountable method to align the school counseling program with the school’s academic mission” (p. 16). A comprehensive school counseling program is data-driven, meaning that the use of data to effect change within the school system is integral to ensuring student success (ASCA, 2005).

Data are used by school counselors to demonstrate the accountability and effectiveness of the school counseling program as well as to promote systemic change within the school. The accountability system, a component of the ASCA National Model, is comprised of results reports, school counselor performance standards, and the program audit (ASCA, 2012). Each of these components requires school counselors to regularly collect and analyze data in order to demonstrate the effectiveness and the essential role the school counselor plays in students’ growth. Data will decisively answer the question, “How are students different as a result of what we do?”

The researcher inferred from the principals’ responses that they agree with other authors’ suggestions that activities are created and implemented based on the school counseling program data, and that it is essential for school counselors to collect and utilize data to evaluate and enhance their school counseling program. This realization would not only be consistent with what the ASCA espouses but would align with the Dahir and Stone (2012) pronouncement that school counselors ought to be skilled in data collection, analysis, and interpretation. They suggested that school counselors examine student growth through three categories of data collection: “student achievement data, school improvement data, and student competency data” (pp. 196-197).
The researcher also deduced from this study’s finding that the counseling programs were primarily non-data driven, that this was a consequence of these schools only having pieces of a comprehensive school counseling program in place. A requirement of a comprehensive school counseling program is that school counselors collect, analyze, and interpret student data. Data can show the effectiveness of services offered or identify ways in which the services can be improved. For instance, data are valuable because they can inform stakeholders regarding whether or not a program is working, what needs to be done or improved, or what needs to be changed or stay the same within the school system. The principals in this study realized that data should be used to steer decision making, validate activities, and interventions offered by the school counseling department.

**Time Commitment**

The principals in this study unanimously agreed that implementing the ASCA National Model requires a commitment of time. For instance, Mr. Jackson described the process of implementation as a “journey.” Mr. Dapper noted, and others echoed, that it is “important to understand the amount of time it takes.” He continued, “This is not going to be done in a year.” The ASCA National Model Handbook (2012) has outlined a three-year implementation plan. Using this handbook, and the ASCA National Model Workbook (2004), school counselors wanting to implement this model can start with the components highlighted in the year-one plan. In year two, the plan delineates the continuation of the year-one plan as well as adding the year two components. In year three, the third-year plan should be implemented with the carryover of year one and two
components. The goal of the three-year plan is that by the end of year three, all the components of the ASCA National Model would be developed, and the school counselor would have a notebook/portfolio to share with administrators, parents, school board, and community members.

The process of implementing the ASCA National Model is time consuming, and individuals who are not knowledgeable about the model, and the amount of time it takes for implementation may ask themselves a question similar to the one that was asked by Mr. Jim: “Is this going to be worth it in the end?” The resounding answer from him and the other principals in this study is yes.

The researcher surmised from the results, reading her field notes, recalling most of the principals’ facial expressions and body language that they were not knowledgeable about the ASCA National Model. For instance, Mr. Sixth acknowledged, “If you ask me what implementation entailed, I couldn’t tell you.” When Mr. Sixth and others discussed the amount of time it took to implement this model, their expressions conveyed that they were surprised it took as long as it did to implement. The researcher deduced from the results that if principals were knowledgeable about the model, they would have been aware before implementing the model that time commitment was important. This lack of familiarity may have impeded them from having discussions with their staff about the amount of time it would take to implement the model. A case in point, Mr. Jim discussed that “with the amount of time that it took, it took a toll on our staff.” He further noted, “Our folks got crushed up under the stress of this.” The researcher inferred from Mr. Jim’s comments that the amount of stress experienced by these school counselors would
have been reduced if time commitment had been discussed during the planning phase of implementation, and had the school counselors utilized the three-year implementation plan recommended by the ASCA. Mr. Jim was not the only principal who did not mention the three-year implementation plan. No principal in this study discussed the three-year implementation plan during their interview with the researcher.

The Implementation Experience

All principals reported that their school counselors were the primary implementers of the ASCA National Model. Most of the principals stated that the school counselors were receptive and excited about implementing this model in their schools. However, two principals noted that a veteran school counselor on their school counseling team was apathetic about its implementation.

School counselors are leaders of the school counseling program. The ASCA (2012) theme of leadership noted that it is vital for school counselors to develop, implement, and manage a comprehensive school counseling program. Serving as the leader of a comprehensive school counseling program, school counselors are supporting and ensuring students’ academic achievement and development by assisting them to obtain access to a thorough school counseling program.

Mason and McMahon (2009) noted that a ubiquitous theory of leadership that is fitting to describe the latest reforms in school counseling is that of transformational leadership.

Transformational leaders are recognized as change agents who are good role models, who can create and articulate a clear vision for an organization, who
empower followers to achieve a higher standard, who act in ways that make others want to trust them, and who give meaning to organizational life. (Northouse, 2004, p. 198)

School counselors as transformational leaders serve as an advocate and collaborate with stakeholders to promote the success of all students. As transformational leaders, it is also important for school counselors to coordinate and facilitate program reform (Bemak, 2000; Herr, 2002) such as the implementation of the ASCA National Model. Therefore, school counselors as the implementers of the ASCA National Model are consistent with what the ASCA and other authors espouse as an appropriate role of school counselors.

Furthermore, the ASCA (2012) stated that school counselors as leaders are uniquely positioned in a school to serve as educational advocates. The theme of advocacy as proposed by the ASCA denotes that school counselors as advocates work to promote students’ achievement by eliminating obstacles that may hinder their academic, career, and personal/social development. They also strive to ensure that students’ needs are dealt with throughout their K–12 academic tenure.

Advocating for the academic achievement of every student is a key role of school counselors and places them at the forefront of efforts to promote school reform. Implementation of the ASCA National Model is an example of such a reform. Leadership and advocacy are essential components of the ASCA National Model and enhance school counselors’ ability to implement a comprehensive school counseling program. Therefore, the researcher infers that school counselors as the implementers of
the ASCA National Model are consistent with school counselors serving not only in the role of leader but also as an educational advocate for school reform. Also, being the implementers of the ASCA National Model is a responsibility that the ASCA recommended to be central among priorities and best practices for school counselors. School counselors address the academic and developmental needs of all students by implementing and managing a comprehensive school counseling program.

**Implementation Advocates**

The results from this study called attention to the advocates during the implementation of the ASCA National Model. The advocates were situated within the school and externally in the school district. The ASCA (2005) encourages collaboration within the school among all school staff as they work toward the common goals of academic achievement and success for all students which is obtained through the implementation of a comprehensive school counseling program (i.e., The ASCA National Model). Additionally, the ASCA suggested that school counselors work together with stakeholders at the district and community levels, informing and educating them regarding the components of a comprehensive school counseling program and on the development of the elements for a comprehensive school counseling program. As a result of doing this, school counselors garner advocates and become “essential partners who enhance the educational opportunities of students” (p. 25).

The theme in this study, implementation advocates, is consistent with the ASCA (2005) statement that “school counselors work with stakeholders, both inside and outside the school, as a part of the comprehensive school counseling program” (p. 25). Through
school, community, and district partnerships, school counselors can obtain a great deal of support for students’ achievement and development that would be difficult to achieve by an individual school counselor. Collaborating with other stakeholders regarding implementing a comprehensive school counseling program, school counselors can address the needs of all students through the integration of the academic, career, and personal/social domains of the program.

Though the data in this study revealed that school counselors had advocates regarding the implementation of the ASCA National model in their schools, it gave emphasis to the reality that they did not collaborate with stakeholders to the extent recommended by the ASCA and other authors. Principals in this study reported that within their schools, the school counselors received some hands-on support from the assistant principal and that teachers were verbally supportive, not hands-on, during the implementation of this model. Principals also indicated that the assistant principals and teachers were not directly asked to assist with the implementation of the ASCA National Model in their schools. Ms. Judy was the only principal who noted that internally everyone in their school worked on the implementation of the ASCA National Model. She remarked that “a representation of all the different factions of the school from teachers, counselors, administrators, everyone. Everyone worked together on it.”

Additionally, principals pointed out that the school counselors did not receive any direct external support regarding the implementation of the ASCA National Model. For example, they indicated that they did not receive any direct support from the superintendent and no outspoken support from the Board of Education when the
implementation of this model was occurring in their school. The researcher contemplated whether the lack of direct and outspoken support was due to the school counselors and principals not candidly communicating with stakeholders about the implementation of the ASCA National Model in their school. No principal verbalized to the researcher that either they or the school counselor solicited assistance or conveyed to external stakeholders information about the implementation of this model. A case in point, Mr. Raider expressed that he never spoke with the superintendent or Board of Education members. Similarly, Mr. Jackson noted

The Superintendent and the Board of Education, was a non-factor . . . well let’s just assume that the Superintendent had authorized this by the actions of our district office in student services, because, again, that was where the emphasis came from and information to all of the deans so that they would have knowledge of . . . So, the Superintendent was aware of that, but there never was any direct communication from the Superintendent about it.

The ASCA (2005) declared that it is important for school counselors as leaders to collaborate “with other professionals in the school to influence system wide changes and implement school reforms” (p. 24). The researcher asserts that it is important for school counselors to collaborate with stakeholders at the district level since it will ensure that the school counseling program is aligned with the district’s educational goals. The researcher affirms that it is beneficial for school counselors to collaborate with other professionals in the school and externally (in the school district) who are part of the team that supports students’ educational and developmental achievement and success. The
aspiration of internal and external collaboration is to acquire a comprehensive team that will generate ideas and provide support that would be of benefit to every student.

As discussed in Chapter 1, when implementing a comprehensive school counseling program, it is essential that school counselors not engage in this undertaking alone. Campbell and Dahir (1997) noted that “the school counselor is not the counseling program. The school counselor and the school counseling program use a collaborative model as their foundation” (p. 9). Schmidt (2003) suggested: (a) identify the needs of students, parents, teachers, administrators, school board, and the community; (b) solicit ideas and include individuals in the change process; (c) establish an advisory committee; and (d) promote the comprehensive school counseling program as a few important steps for schools counselors to take when developing a plan to implement a comprehensive school counseling program. Schmidt also pointed out that utilizing a collaborative approach is essential. Therefore, it is important for school counselors to include various individuals in the planning process. Gysbers and Henderson (2000) suggested that the exchange of ideas, the processing of thoughts, reactions, and disagreement by a variety of people during the planning phase is critical.

Only one principal in this study, Mr. Jackson, talked about his school counselors employing one of the above suggestions. The recommendation by Schmidt and the ASCA that Mr. Jackson’s school counselors employed and others could have was to institute an advisory committee. An advisory committee is created to aid in the enhancement of the school counseling program. The ASCA suggested that this committee include “students, parents or guardian, teachers, counselors, administrators,
school board members, business and community members” (p. 47). By establishing an advisory committee school counselors are fostering a collaborative partnership with stakeholders, informing and educating them about the ASCA National Model, and acquiring their support. School counselors solicit the help of this group in supporting, advising, and advocating for the development of school wide programs that will improve student learning, increase rapport among building staff, and build a positive school atmosphere (Gysbers & Henderson, 2000; Schmidt, 2003). Not forming an advisory committee could be another explanation as to why school counselors did not receive any direct external support and limited internal support regarding the implementation of the ASCA National Model in their schools.

**Advice to Peers**

Most of the principals in this study had recommendations for colleagues with regards to implementing the ASCA National Model. The advice consisted of delegating responsibilities yet staying hands-on in the process, trusting the school counselors and communicating with them on an ongoing basis, being knowledgeable about the model, and making a determination about whether or not it will address the students’ needs in their school, obtaining stakeholders’ buy-in and engaging them in the process, recognizing the amount of time it will take to implement the model and their role with its implementation. Based on these recommendations, the researcher pondered whether or not the principals in this study recognized the importance of shared leadership and developing the leadership role of their school counselors.
Principals are leaders of the school (Kafka, 2009); however, ASCA (2012) recommended that they share leadership with school counselors. Leithwood et al. (2004) noted that one of the most important things principals can do to improve student achievement is to share leadership. They remarked that principals typically benefit from their willingness to share leadership due to the “collective knowledge and wisdom” of the professionals in their school (p. 35). They concluded that

There seems little doubt that both district and school leadership provides a critical bridge between most educational-reform initiatives, and having those reforms makes a genuine difference for all students. Such leadership comes from many sources, not just superintendents and principals. But those in formal positions of authority in school systems are likely still the most influential. (p. 14)

“Effective” or “successful” leadership is vital to school reform and “is second only to classroom instruction among school-related factors” that influence student learning (Leithwood et al., 2004, pp. 4-5). The authors indicated that successful educational leaders cultivate their schools as an efficient organization that supports and sustains the achievement of staff as well as students. Sharing leadership with the school counselors is an example of principals recognizing and fostering school counselors’ leadership role. Based on these authors’ observation and suggestions it appears that it would be advantageous for principals to share leadership with school counselors since they are leaders of school counseling programs. School counselors’ implementing the ASCA National Model is one form of exhibiting their leadership skills in a way that will contribute to students’ academic, career, and personal/social development. Implementing
the ASCA National Model is an educational reform initiative that would not only employ school counselor’s leadership skills but will also be beneficial to all students in their schools.

Leithwood et al. (2004) affirmed that another term for shared leadership that has been used in education is “distributed leadership” (p. 7). They indicated that the term distributed leadership has “commonsense meanings and connotations that are not disputed” because “neither superintendents nor principals can do the whole leadership task by themselves” (p. 7). They further stated that successful leaders foster the skills and depend on the assistance from numerous individuals in their organizations.

The researcher deems that the advice principals in this study offered to their peers would be consistent with the function of principals in a shared leadership or distributed leadership position. For example, Mr. Jackson’s advice is to “trust the counselors,” “delegate responsibilities,” and “communicate with them on an ongoing basis.” Mr. Dapper suggested, “accept the part that you have to play in supporting the person implementing the ASCA Model . . . and be transparent about what it means to the overall arching purpose of the school.”

Harris (2012) reported that

The research evidence highlights that without the support of the principal, distributed leadership is unlikely to flourish or be sustained. Evidence shows that effective principals orchestrate the structural and cultural conditions in which distributed leadership is more or less likely. They play a key role in leadership distribution and are a critical component in building leadership capacity
throughout the school. At the school level, to varying degrees all change flows through the principal’s office. (p. 8)

By distributing leadership, principals have an opportunity to construct greater support and understanding among faculty, and staff members by providing them leadership opportunities and allowing them to take on more responsibility, and perform duties which are supported and recommended by their training program and professional organization.

Principals in this study exhibited distributed leadership by allowing their school’s counselors to implement the ASCA National Model in their schools. A few lessons learned and advice offered from doing so which are mentioned above include “delegate responsibilities” and “accept the part that you have to play in supporting the person implementing the ASCA Model.” The researcher believes that principals as leaders of the school engaging in distributed leadership would exhibit skills similar to those the principals in this study offered as advice to their peers. For example, principals are responsible for delegating tasks to the appropriate professional in their school. The delegation of tasks is considered one of the most important skills they can develop and exhibit (Bass & Avolio, 1994). In order to delegate tasks, principals have to be able to recognize the expertise of their team and trust their ability. “Trust the counselors” with the implementation of the ASCA National Model was an advice offered by Mr. Jackson.

Clearly and succinctly communicating with others about the school’s vision, programs, and educational reform initiative is a vital task for principals to engage in (Kouzes & Posner, 2007). For instance, it is important that principals communicate with stakeholders regarding school reform initiative; address how the change will affect
students, stakeholders, and the overall mission of the school (Schmidt, 2003). Likewise, Gysbers and Henderson (2000) noted articulating plainly and ascertaining that each staff member and stakeholder has an understanding of the change, how the change will affect them, and how to respond to the change is of the essence in order to successfully implement a comprehensive school counseling program.

Principals in this study offered a similar opinion to that of the authors above. As stated earlier, Mr. Raider recommended that principals do their “homework so that you will be fully aware (of the model) and make sure it is something that your stakeholders, leadership team, staff, and parents have truly bought into.” Similarly, Ms. Judy stated, “Look at the model . . . look at the students’ needs, the community’s needs, and see if what is in the ASCA model (that) would indeed better serve their students.” Mr. Dapper’s advice to peers was to “be transparent about what it means to the overall arching purpose of the school.” The researcher construed that if principals apply the advice offered by the principals in this study and embrace shared leadership they will be more likely to receive the support and dedication needed in order to implement a comprehensive school counseling program. The researcher agrees with Stone and Clark’s (2001) statement that

Although the school counselor and principal may have separate and specific roles and responsibilities to carry out, there is overlap with regard to accomplishing common goals for the school and its students. New attitudes about school counselors and principals joining forces for leadership and advocacy can
positively affect a school’s mission, its climate, and its students’ ability to achieve academic success. (p. 46)

**Implications**

The research findings have implications for school counselors as well as school counselors and principals who may be considering implementing the ASCA National Model in their school. Also, recommendations for training programs and future research are explored.

**Implications for School Counselors**

It is essential for school counselors to be diligent in advocating for the implementation of the ASCA National Model in their school. In this study, most of the principals stated that the impetus to implement the ASCA National Model originated at the district level. Principals reported, however, that regardless of where the impetus was generated they were agreeable to implementing the model in their schools. They reported that during their deliberation, they considered the internal and external benefits of implementation. Principals noted the internal benefit they considered was how the model would be beneficial to students by improving the delivery of services offered and being more responsive to their needs. The external benefit they contemplated was how through the implementation of the ASCA National Model parents and the community would become more engaged in what is going on with the school.

Principals in this study did not mention any benefits for school counselors as a result of implementing the ASCA National Model. However, the researcher thinks that a benefit for school counselors that may occur as a result of implementing the ASCA
National Model is improved time management. A school counselor who works in a school that has a comprehensive school counseling program is essentially being helped by the model with managing his or her time. The design of the model requires that the school counselor provide services to all students through the school counseling program. The researcher wonders if without a comprehensive school counseling program, school counselors are often providing direct services to some students. However, with a comprehensive school counseling program, school counselors can provide direct services to all students, which is the appropriate role and use of school counselors’ time as outlined by the ASCA National Model.

A case in point, the delivery system of the ASCA National Model consists of the guidance curriculum. The guidance curriculum in a school counseling program includes competencies from the academic, career, and personal/social domains. The school counselor delivers guidance curriculum to all students through classroom lessons. The guidance curriculum components are classroom guidance lessons, individual student planning (advisement or appraisal), responsive services (individual/group counseling and consultation), and system support (professional development and program management, ASCA, 2012).

Through the delivery of the guidance curriculum, school counselors can facilitate discussion on preventive, proactive classroom lessons to all students addressing issues such as bullying, suicide, and conflict resolution. By doing this, they are providing direct services by way of the preventative lesson plan that is taught in a classroom setting.
addressing a greater number of students rather than concentrating on, for instance, a single student who is being bullied.

The ASCA National Model (2012) states that a primary role of school counselors is to deliver a comprehensive school counseling program which facilitates all students’ academic, career, and personal/social development. This model also states that the role of school counselors is to develop, coordinate, implement, and evaluate a comprehensive school counseling program that encourages the learning and achievement of all students. Since the ASCA has delineated the role of school counselors, the researcher feels that it is imperative for school counselors to advocate for their appropriate role and engage in tasks that are consistent with this role which encompasses generating the momentum for implementing and executing the implementation of the ASCA National Model in their school.

Principals in this study stated that they were aware of the recognition their school receives from the community. They also noted that they considered the recognition that their school would receive if they implemented the ASCA National Model. Based on these findings, the researcher infers that it is important for school counselors to speak with and explain to community members and stakeholders about the comprehensive school counseling program. This opinion is similar to a recommendation by Gysbers and Henderson (2000) who expressed that school counselors should update the community about the comprehensive school counseling program. They indicated that by doing this, school counselors would be building rapport with community members, educating them
about the school counseling program, and gaining knowledge about employment opportunities and resources that are available in the community for students.

Similarly, Schmidt (2003) pointed out that the purpose of promoting the comprehensive school counseling program is two-fold. He indicated that the first goal is to inform students, parents, teachers, school board members, and the community about the benefits of having a comprehensive school counseling program. The second goal is to have school counselors visible and active in the school and community endorsing the comprehensive school counseling program.

The researcher agrees with the recommendations of the authors above. She reiterates that it is vital for school counselors to inform and educate all stakeholders about the comprehensive school counseling program, and the different ways it will address all students’ academic, career, and personal/social development. The researcher also believes that by communicating with all stakeholders about the model, school counselors would be acquiring support and cooperation to effectively and efficiently implement the ASCA National Model in their school.

It is important for school counselors to collect and utilize data when making decisions that will impact students and to demonstrate the effectiveness of the school counseling program. A few of the principals in this study stated that the school counseling program that was in place in their school prior to the implementation of the ASCA National Model was not data driven.

Several authors have indicated that it is important for school counselors to use data to illustrate the strengths, deficits, and ways the school counseling program has
impacted the academic, career, and personal/social developments of students. For instance, the ASCA National Model (2012) denotes that data ought to be used to show the success or weakness of the counseling program. Activities should also be developed and implemented based on the school counseling program data. Furthermore, the ASCA describes the use of data as an “accountable method to align the school counseling program with the school’s academic mission” (p. 16).

Accountability, in school counseling, is the ability of school counselors to demonstrate the effectiveness of the school counseling program in measurable terms (ASCA, 2012). School counselors utilize data to illustrate accountability by showing how the school counseling program has impacted school improvement and students’ achievement. Green and Keys (2001) indicated that historically, school counselors have felt obligated to show the effectiveness of the school counseling program. Currently, they are expected to demonstrate how the services they provide assist the school in attaining its educational mission (Eschenauer & Chen-Hayes, 2005; Schmidt, 2003; Stone & Dahir, 2004). By using data, school counselors can connect student achievement to the school counseling program. As a result of collecting, analyzing, and utilizing data, school counselors will be able to answer the question proposed by ASCA: “How are students different as a result of what we do?” (ASCA, 2003, p. 9).

Presently, the topic of accountability is in the forefront of conversations regarding schools effectiveness, specifically the effectiveness of school counselors and the school counseling program. School counselors are not only being asked to convey to stakeholders and the community information about their role, they are also being asked to
show how what they do makes a difference in the lives of students. The researcher believes and agrees that by collecting, analyzing, and evaluating the school counseling program, school counselors will obtain data that will provide them with a better understanding of their students’ needs, discover areas of concerns, authenticate progress, and determine needs, and steps to take relating to changes regarding the comprehensive school counseling program. It is important for school counselors to demonstrate to stakeholders that each activity implemented as part of the school counseling program was developed from a careful analysis of students’ data.

The researcher believes that it is important for school counselors to feel confident in their ability to collect, analyze, and utilize data. If they are not, it is vital for them to seek out professional development opportunities to learn more about how to engage in data collection, analysis, and utilization. They can seek continuing education opportunities through university coursework, professional conferences, and workshops. School counselors can also develop collaborative relationships with university faculty with expertise in evaluation in order to enhance their ability with program evaluation.

An advisory committee is an integral component of a school counseling program. The ASCA (2005) noted that the advisory committee “provides support, input and recommendations for program development and improvement” (p. 47). Only one principal in this study revealed that the school counselors created an advisory committee. An advisory committee is made up of stakeholders such as “students, parents or guardians, teachers, counselors, administrators, school board members, business and community members” (ASCA, 2005, p. 47). The researcher believes that having an
advisory committee would aid school counselors with gaining internal and external support with regards to the implementation of the ASCA National Model. It would prevent school counselors from working in isolation and assist stakeholders in answering the question, “What do school counselors actually do?”

The researcher speculates that school counselors who were trained prior to the 2003 publication of the ASCA National Model may not be aware of the appropriate school counselor’s role outlined in the ASCA National Model. A case in point, two principals in this study reported that a veteran school counselor on their school counseling team had no interest in implementing the ASCA National Model in their school. Such school counselors may be reluctant to implement the model due to their lack of knowledge about it. Therefore, it is important for school counselors who are not familiar with the ASCA National Model to obtain current training to better understand their role and responsibilities within the school. Gaining this knowledge may motivate them to engage in appropriate tasks that include the implementation of the ASCA National Model.

**Implications for School Counselors and Principals**

The principals in this study reported that the school counselors in their school implemented the ASCA National Model. They described the internal and external support received with regards to this model’s implementation. The principals noted that their assistant principals offered some hands-on support and that their teachers were verbally supportive. They expressed that the external support received was indirect support from the superintendent and the Board of Education members.
Based on the results of this study, the researcher suggests that school counselors and principals in their shared leadership role engage others when the impetus of implementing the ASCA National Model is being engendered and when the implementation of this model is being carried out. Numerous authors have suggested that when implementing a comprehensive school counseling program, it is vital that this undertaking not be done exclusively by the school counselor (Brooks-McNamara & Pedersen, 2006; Campbell & Dahir, 1997; Gysbers & Henderson, 2000; Johnson et al., 2006; Schmidt, 2003; Zalequett, 2005). Mitchell and Gysbers (1978) cited by Gysbers and Henderson (2000) noted that it is essential to involve all staff members, and that “all staff members see the comprehensive systematic counseling and guidance program as a function of the total staff rather than the exclusive responsibility of the counselors” (p. 44). Schmidt (2003) suggested that ideas should be solicited and others should be included in the change process.

The researcher suggests that school counselors and principals communicate with stakeholders about the ASCA National Model. Communication is the foundation of effective partnerships. In order to build an effective partnership with stakeholders, school counselors and principals must communicate with and listen to stakeholders. It is vital for school counselors and principals to take the initiative to inform and educate internally the assistant principal and teachers and externally the superintendent, Board of Education members, parents or guardians and the community about educational reform initiative (i.e., the ASCA National Model) that is being implemented in the school. A successful
partnership, which is developed and maintained through communication, is required to sustain mutual collaboration and support from all stakeholders.

None of the principals in this study reported that they or the school counselors reached out internally or externally for support with regards to implementing the ASCA National Model. For example, no principal reported that they or the school counselor informed stakeholders by having a community forum, or sending out emails or newsletters to discuss this model being implemented in their school. This lack of communication may be a reason why the principals in this study reported that they received only some hands-on support from the assistant principal, only verbal support from teachers, and only indirect support from the superintendent and the Board of Education members.

It is vital that principals learn about the ASCA National model. One principal in this study indicated that he wished he had done more research about the ASCA National Model. Another stated, “if you asked me what implementation entailed, I couldn’t tell you.” This researcher suggests that school counselors educate principals about the ASCA National Model. Other authors have also expressed a similar opinion. They indicated that since principals often make the decision about the role of school counselors in their schools (Fitch et al., 2001; Ribak-Rosenthal, 1994) and their support is fundamental to the development, implementation, and maintenance of a comprehensive school counseling program (Dollarhide et al., 2007) it is essential that school counselors educate principals about the ASCA National Model and their appropriate role. The researcher believes that school counselors informing principals about this model may aid them in
understanding it and increase their ability to identify and espouse the appropriate role of
school counselors. Principals obtaining knowledge about his model may also support
school counselors with its implementation.

As discussed in Chapter 1, role confusion has been a concern for school
counselors since the formation of the school counseling profession and continues to be an
issue today (Amatea & Clark, 2005; Burnham & Jackson, 2000; Leuwerke et al., 2009;
McGlothlin & Miller 2008; Monteiro-Leitner et al., 2006; Ponec & Brock, 2000;
Ribak-Rosenthal, 1994; Zalaquett, 2005). The noncounseling duties performed by school
counselors have worried a number of researchers throughout the years (Baker, 1992;
Bemak, 2000; Gysbers & Henderson, 2000; Kirchner & Setchfield, 2005; Schmidt,
2003). The researcher believes that school counselors have a duty to educate school
administrators about their appropriate role and duties outlined by ASCA (2012), which
includes:

- Students’ academic program planning
- Collaborating with teachers to present school counseling core curriculum
  lessons
- Analyzing grade point averages in relationship to achievement
- Providing teachers with suggestions for effective classroom management
- Providing individual and small group counseling services to students
- Advocating for students
- Analyzing aggregated and disaggregated data
As indicated earlier, when school counselors approach principals regarding implementing the ASCA National Model in their school, they educate administrators about their role and ensure that they are engaging in appropriate duties. It is essential for school counselor to discuss with principals the benefits and highlight the multitude of direct and indirect counseling services and activities that are integral components of the school counseling program. It is also imperative that during this discussion school counselors explain the scope of the counselor’s role, responsibilities, and resources. They must also define the parameters of the ASCA National Model and discuss alignment of the school counseling program with the goal of school improvement. The researcher feels that as the educational leader of the school, it is vital that principals understand the ASCA National Model. Understanding the model will assist them when communicating with others about the model. Being knowledgeable about the model, role, and duties of school counselors will aid them in answering questions such as “What is it that school counselors actually do?” and “How are students different as a result of what school counselors do?”

The researcher also believes that it is important for principals to hire well-trained school counselors who are competent in educating students and enhancing their academic, career, and personal/social development. Being knowledgeable about the ASCA National Model would assist principals when hiring school counselors. For example, they can ask interview questions recommended by the ASCA such as:

1. What do you see as the main role of a school counselor?

2. What is your experience with implementing the ASCA National Model?
3. Have you implemented any components of the ASCA National Model?

4. What does your future comprehensive school counseling program look like?
   What is your plan for achieving this?

5. How does a comprehensive school counseling program support the school’s academic mission?

6. How do you use data in a school counseling program?

7. How will you evaluate your school counseling program?

8. How do school counselors advocate for students differently than other school staff?

**Implications for Training Programs**

Since principals have a great deal of influence on shaping and guiding the role of school counselors within their school, and often assign inappropriate tasks to them (Leuwerke et al., 2009), the researcher believes that principals and school counselors may benefit from being educated about each other’s role. A place where these future professionals can learn about each other’s role and responsibilities is in their graduate preparation program. Similarly, Amatea and Clark (2005) recommended from their study on school administrators’ conceptions of the school counselor role that it would be helpful for Colleges of education to initiate courses, seminars, and field experiences in which graduate students in counseling, educational leadership, and teaching are enrolled together so that they can learn what each has to offer and how to work as a team.

(p. 25)
Shoffner and Williamson (2000) stated that since school counselors and principals are trained separately, they have few opportunities to learn about each other’s role, responsibilities, and perspectives. The researcher deems that in conjunction with the Shoffner and Williamson explanation, this lack of knowledge about the school counselor’s role may be due to the fact that principals often progress into the position of principalship after serving as a teacher and assistant principal. For example, five of the six principals in this study reported that they progressed into their current role as principal after serving as a teacher and assistant principal.

Rambo-Igney and Smith (2005) conducted a study that evaluated the pre- and post-test results on the Principal and School Counselors Attitude Survey. The results indicated that after pre-service school counselors and principals were together for a four-hour collaborative session, the mean level of principals’ perceptions regarding “the appropriateness of designating responsibility for the preparation of master schedule” (p. 31) declined significantly. This study reveals that with training and understanding of the appropriate activities for school counselors, principals can alter their view regarding the role of school counselors. Therefore, the researcher suggests that counselor educators and education administration faculty work together to ensure that future school counselors and principals are aware of each other’s roles.

It is imperative that school counselors be educational leaders in their schools. The principals in this study did not speak to whether or not the school counselors in their schools possessed leadership skills. However, the researcher concludes from the findings of this study that the school counselors did engage in leadership activities. All principals
reported that the school counselors implemented the ASCA National Model and two stated that a school counselor working in their school introduced the idea of implementing this model in their school. However, none of the principals reported that the school counselors communicated with stakeholders about the ASCA National Model or collaborated with colleagues regarding its implementation. The results from this study suggests that these school counselors had the ability to be transformational leaders but that most did not engage in this role until they were called upon to do so.

Leadership is one of the four themes delineated in the ASCA National Model. The importance of the leadership theme is underscored by the fact that the additional themes of advocacy, collaboration, and systemic change require leadership skills. Advocacy and collaboration are utilized by school counselors when developing and implementing a comprehensive school counseling program which will speak to systemic change. Therefore, leadership skills are essential for school counselors undertaking the development and implementation of the ASCA National Model (ASCA, 2012).

Shillingford and Lambie (2010) had a similar view when they indicated that school counselors provide leadership by supporting students’ academic and developmental achievements, upholding and advocating for professional identity, and addressing the discrepancy of job responsibilities which are carried out by putting into practice the four themes outlined in the ASCA National Model. The ASCA (2005) stated and Dahir and Stone (2009) reiterated that when school counselors implement these themes they are employing a leadership position within the school that will promote the academic, career, and personal/social development of all students.
For the above mentioned reasons, it is essential for school counseling training programs to prepare school counselors to become leaders. The researcher is unsure whether or not the school counselors in this study were trained in programs that infused leadership skills throughout their curriculum. Mason and McMahon (2009) concluded, and the researcher agrees, “efforts to prepare school counselors to be leaders in schools are not yet being translated to their work in the schools” (p. 114). They continued that school counseling training programs have to do a better job scrutinizing whether or not their curriculum is focused on developing students’ leadership skills and “whether current practices in graduate programs translate to leadership practices on the job” (p. 114). The researcher thinks that it is important for counselor educators to investigate whether or not school counselor graduates are employing skills learned in their graduate training programs in their school settings and to weigh this knowledge in deciding what skills ought to be taught in their training programs.

The researcher believes that school counseling training programs can enhance and develop leadership skills in future school counselors by training them how to become advocates for the students they serve, for themselves, and for the school counseling profession. Proficiency in dialoguing, consulting, and collaborating with administrators, parents and guardians, teachers, and community members ought to be taught and evaluated by counselor educators. As a result of gaining these skills, school counselors may become more comfortable employing a leadership role within the schools. Acquiring a leadership skill set may give them the confidence to collaborate with others, develop and implement the ASCA National Model, and advocate for all students by
articulating students’ needs and reporting their outcomes. When school counselors are trained to be leaders in their schools, they are able to be “the voice” for all students.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

The current study investigated the implementation of the ASCA National Model by high school principals in their schools. Important and useful data emerged from this research study, yet more research is needed. This study discovered seminal information regarding the experiences of high school principals who implemented the ASCA National Model and revealed the impetus for this model’s implementation. These unique findings specific to the experiences of high school principals while implementing the ASCA National Model in their school illumine the need for continued research on the implementation of the ASCA National Model in schools.

Future research can explore this topic from various viewpoints in order to develop an understanding regarding the experience of and the impetus for implementing this model. For example, future research can focus on the experiences of elementary and middle school principals while implementing this model in their schools. The focus of this study was limited to high schools in order to provide consistency to the research study; high, middle, and elementary school settings are quite different. Understanding the impetus and experience of implementing this model in elementary and middle school may provide new information on this topic.

Another area for future research is investigating the experience of school counselors while implementing this model in their schools. All of the principals in this study reported that the school counselors implemented the ASCA National Model in their
school. Understanding the experience of school counselors while implementing this model may provide principals and school counselors with valuable information regarding the implementation of this model in their schools.

A variation of the current study would be to interview high schools principals whose school did not receive the Recognized ASCA Model Program (RAMP) award and inquire about whether or not their schools have implemented the ASCA National Model. One of the criteria for this study was that in order for the principal to participate, their school had to have received the RAMP award during the 2010–2011, 2011–2012, or 2012–2013 academic years. By interviewing principals whose schools did not receive the RAMP award, the researcher might have discovered: (a) whether or not these schools had implemented the ASCA National Model; (b) if they had implemented it, their reasons for not applying for the RAMP award; and (c) if they had not implemented it, their reasons for not doing so.

**Limitations**

Only one female principal participated in this research study. The purpose of this study was to investigate the implementation of the ASCA National Model by high school principals in their schools. The list that was provided to the researcher by the ASCA with the 2010–2011, 2011–2012, or 2012–2013 RAMP recipients showed that only a few schools that received the RAMP award had a female principal. The researcher invited all of the female principals on the list to participate in this researcher study. However, only the one female principal who participated in this study responded to the researcher’s
invitation. Future researchers should focus on increasing the number of female principals in their study.

At the initial interview, a few of the principals indicated that the school counselor implemented the ASCA National Model in their school and that the school counselor may be better equipped to answer the researcher’s questions. These principals provided concise answers to the researcher’s questions and did not elaborate after their initial response. Although all of the principals appeared relaxed during the initial interview and stated that they realized that this study was focused on the experiences of principals while implementing this model in their school, it is possible that a few of the principals were not able to elaborate beyond their preliminary response because they indeed did not implement the ASCA National Model in their school and as a result they did not feel comfortable answering the researcher’s questions.

Asking questions about the experience of implementing the ASCA National Model which were similar to questions about the impetus for implementing the ASCA National Model presented a limitation. A few of the principals provided short answers when they answered questions regarding the implementation of the model. For example, when asked, “What assistance did you receive from the assistant principal(s) with implementing the ASCA National Model? Mr. Dapper stated, “Acceptance.” However, he elaborated beyond this one-word answer when asked, “What support did you receive from assistant principals when considering implementing the ASCA National Model?”
Delimitations

Delimitations of a research study consist of the restrictions the researcher places on the study before the start of data collection. The restrictions affect how the results can be applied to individuals other than those that participated in the study. The results of this research study were not intended to be generalized beyond the principals who were participants in this study. The results of this study can only be applied to the principals in this study. Delimitations for this research study include the small sample size, potential bias in sampling, and limiting the sample to high school principals: (a) who took part in the decision and implementation of the ASCA National Model in their school, (b) whose school received the RAMP award during the 2010–2011, 2011–2012, or 2012–2013 academic year, and (c) who were willing to participate in two digitally recorded individual face-to-face interviews. This research was intended to provide a research base from which more questions regarding the experience of high school principals while implementing the ASCA National Model in their schools can be investigated.

Researcher’s Perspective

My interest in this research study began when I read several referred journal articles that addressed school counselors performing inappropriate tasks in their schools. I pondered (a) the reasons why school counselors were not engaging in appropriate responsibilities, and (b) contemplated if school counselors were implementing the ASCA National Model in their school. Implementing the ASCA National Model would be an appropriate role for a school counselor that is endorsed by the ASCA. After reading numerous referred journal articles that discussed the building principal as the leader of
the school, and as a result having an influence regarding the school counselor’s role, I decided that I wanted to interview principals whose school had implemented the ASCA National Model since their school counselor would be performing appropriate duties as delineated by the ASCA. I determined that one of the ways to find out the name of schools that had implemented the ASCA National Model was to contact the ASCA and obtain a list of schools that had received the Recognized ASCA Model Program (RAMP) award as a result of implementing the ASCA National Model in their school. I invited numerous RAMP recipient school principals to take part in this study, however, only a few responded to my invitation. Five of the respondents did not meet the study’s inclusion criteria. Six principals meet the inclusion criteria and were participants in this study.

I appreciate the time these principals shared with me in support of this research study. The principals were willing to trust and converse openly with me regarding their experiences. I am grateful for the opportunity to hear these principals’ stories regarding the implementation of the ASCA National Model in their schools. The commitment of these principals gave me a richer understanding of their experiences.

My desire is to become a counselor educator in a school counseling program. I plan to use the knowledge gained as a result of conducting this study to enhance my teaching aptitude. For example, I was encouraged to discover that the principals in this study were agreeable to implementing the ASCA National Model in their schools regardless of where the impetus was generated. I am aware that the results from this study cannot be generalized beyond the principals in this study. However, this discovery
can be shared with future school counselors and they can decide if it is advantageous for them to discuss the ASCA National Model with their building principal, if they are employed by a school that does not have a comprehensive school counseling program.

As a future counselor educator, what I have learned from the results of this study will enhance my knowledge and teaching aptitude. I see my responsibility as training future school counselors about their appropriate role within the school and how to conduct the tasks espoused within this role. For example, this training will include discussing the ASCA National Model, the school counselor’s role and responsibilities outline, and how to perform them. By learning about the appropriate school counselors’ role and how to carry-out the responsibilities delineated in the ASCA National Model future school counselors will be capable of designing, implementing, evaluating, and improving a comprehensive school counseling program which will address the academic, career, and personal/social developmental needs of all students.

Overall, this study was a meaningful experience since it provided me with an opportunity to examine a phenomenon in which I have been interested.

**Summary**

This final chapter reviewed the research findings as related to existing literature on the implementation of the ASCA National Model, contributions of the research findings, implications of this study, and the limitations and delimitations of the current study. The themes that emerged from the phenomenological analysis of the data suggest that there is a common experience amongst high school principals regarding the implementation of the ASCA National Model in their school. It is essential to convey
that although common themes have emerged amongst the principals, each principal had a distinctive experience with regards to the implementation of this model in their school.

The findings of this phenomenological study illuminated the common experiences amongst principals regarding the impetus for implementing and their experience while implementing the ASCA National Model in their schools, which have been absent from previous studies in the counseling literature. The findings from this research study will contribute to the literature by highlighting the impetus and experience of high school principals with regards to the implementation of the ASCA National Model in their schools. It is the goal of this researcher that this research study will generate momentum for further study on the impetus and experience of implementing the ASCA National Model in schools.
APPENDIX A

E-MAIL TO AND RESPONSE FROM ASCA
Appendix A

E-Mail to and Response From ASCA

ASCA National Model

RABEENA ALLI <ralli@kent.edu>

Mon, Mar 19, 2012 at 12:43 PM

To: Jill Cook <jcook@schoolcounselor.org>, rabeena.alli@gmail.com

Hello Ms. Cook,

My name is Rabeena Alli. I am a doctoral candidate in the Counseling and Human Development Program at Kent State University. I am completing my dissertation on the Perceptions of high school principals regarding the implementation of the ASCA National Model in their schools. I would like to use the graph located on page 20 of the National Model in chapter 1 of my dissertation. It is the graph that “represents the operational structure and components of the ASCA’s National Model” (ASCA, 2003, p. 21). Can I use this graph? If yes, how do I go about getting permission to use this graph since its copyright?

Thanks,
Rabeena

RABEENA ALLI <ralli@kent.edu>

Mon, Mar 19, 2012 at 12:38 PM

To: RABEENA ALLI <ralli@kent.edu>

Hi Rabeena,

Kathleen Rakestraw from ASCA will be in touch with you about this – krakestraw@schoolcounselor.org.
Let me know if you have other questions.
Take care,
Jill Cook

Assistant Director
American School Counselor Association
1101 King Street, Suite 625
Alexandria, VA 22314
703-683-2722
FAX: 703-683-1619
www.schoolcounselor.org

Be Brilliant at the ASCA Annual Conference in Minneapolis, June 23-26, 2012.
Fwd: ASCA National Model

Kathleen Rakestraw <KRakestraw@schoolcounselor.org>
To: ralli@kent.edu

Mon, Mar 19, 2012 at 2:15 PM

Just credit Permission granted. ASCA and you’re good to go.

Kathleen Rakestraw
krakestraw@schoolcounselor.org
Director of Communications
American School Counselor Association
(703) 864-8734
(703) 242-9351, fax

Begin forwarded message:

From: Jill Cook <JCook@schoolcounselor.org>
Date: March 19, 2012 12:37:43 PM EDT
To: Kathleen Rakestraw<KRakestraw@schoolcounselor.org>
Subject: FW: ASCA National Model

Will you assist her?

From: RABEENA ALLI <ralli@kent.edu>
Sent: Monday, March 19, 2012 12:44 PM
To: Jill Cook; ralli@kent.edu
Subject: ASCA National Model

Hello Ms. Cook,
My name is Rabeena Alli. I am a doctoral candidate in the Counseling and Human Development Program at Kent State University. I am completing my dissertation on the Perceptions of high school principals regarding the implementation of the ASCA National Model in their schools. I would like to use the graph located on page 20 of the National Model in chapter 1 of my dissertation. It is the graph that “represents the operational structure and components of the ASCA’s National Model” (ASCA, 2003, p. 21). Can I use this graph? If yes, how do I go about getting permission to use this graph since its copyright?

Thanks,
Rabeena
APPENDIX B

KENT STATE IRB APPROVAL
Appendix B

Kent State IRB Approval

Study Title: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AMERICAN SCHOOL COUNSELING ASSOCIATION (ASCA) NATIONAL MODEL: A FRAMEWORK FOR SCHOOL COUNSELING PROGRAMS BY HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPALS IN THEIR SCHOOLS

Principal Investigator: Dr. John Steve Rainey

Co-Investigator: Rabeeba Ali

You are being invited to participate in a research study on the implementation of the ASCA National Model by high school principals in their schools. I have chosen this dissertation topic because I believe that investigating the imputus for implementing and experience while implementing the ASCA National Model in high schools is essential with assisting school counselors and principals with anticipating issues such as: how the decision is made, who makes the decision, who supports the decision, and steps that needs to be taken in order to implement the ASCA National Model.

If you decide to take part in this study, you will be asked to participate in two digitally recorded individual face-to-face interviews with the first lasting approximately 60 minutes and the second lasting 50 minutes. These interviews will be scheduled at a time and location most convenient for you. All digitally recorded interviews will be destroyed at the end of the research project and only limited demographic information will be included in the final report. Each participant will choose a pseudonym for data presentation. All information will be kept in a secure location and will only be accessed by the researcher. The findings of this research will be published in a doctoral dissertation in Counselor Education and Supervision, presented at professional conferences and included in future scholarly publications.

If you take part in this research project, a potential benefit may be providing the opportunity to reflect on implementing the ASCA National Model in your school. The interview questions are intended to allow you to reflect on this experience. Examples include: “How did you learn about the ASCA National Model?” “Who initially advocated for the implementation of the ASCA National Model?” and “Describe your overall experience with implementing the ASCA National Model?” Your participation may also benefit school counselors and principals desiring to implement this model. Taking part in this project is voluntary and you can discontinue your participation at any time without penalty. There are no anticipated risks beyond those encountered in everyday life.

If you have questions about the study, please contact me at 330-672-2344 or via email at mjl@kent.edu. My dissertation advisors Drs. Steve Rainey and Martin Jerebiak can be reached...
Digital Recording Consent Form

I agree to participate in a digitally recorded interview about high school principals implementing the American School Counseling Association (ASCA) National Model: A Framework for School Counseling Programs in their schools. As part of this project and for the purposes of data analysis, I agree that Zareena Ali may digitally record this interview. I know what my participation in this study will require and that I can stop at any time without incurring penalty. The data, time and place of the interview were mutually agreed upon.

______________________________  _________________________
Signature                          Date

I have been told that I have the right to listen to the recording of the interview before it is used. I have decided that I:

_____ want to listen to the recording     _____ do not want to listen to the recording

Sign below if you do not want to listen to the recording. If you want to listen to the recording, you will be asked to sign after listening to them.

______________________________  _________________________
Signature                          Date

Zareena Ali may or may not use the digital recordings made of me. The original recording or copies may be used for:

_____ this research project _____ publication _____ presentation at professional meetings

______________________________  _________________________
Signature                          Date
This project has been approved by the Kent State University Human Subject Review Board. If you have any questions about Kent State University's rules for research, please call the Kent State University Institutional Review Board at 330-672-2704.

You will be provided with a copy of this consent form.

Sincerely,
Roberta Alli, M.A., NCC, LPC
Doctoral Candidate

CONSENT STATEMENT(S)

I agree to take part in this project. I know what I will have to do and that I can stop at any time.

__________________________________________  _________________
Signature                                     Date
APPENDIX C

RECRUITMENT SCRIPT
Appendix C

Recruitment Script

Hello (Participant Name):

My name is Rabeena Alli, and I am a doctoral student at Kent State University in Kent, Ohio. I am currently working on my dissertation in Counselor Education and Supervision and am recruiting volunteers for a research study on the implementation of the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) National Model: A Framework for School Counseling Programs by high school principals in their schools. I obtained a list from ASCA which shows your school as a RAMP recipient in (year the school received the RAMP award). The list indicated your name and contact information as the principal who implemented the ASCA National Model in your school. If this is correct, I would like to know if you are willing to participate in this research project. If yes, (1) are you the high school principal who took part in the decision and implementation of the ASCA National Model in this school, (2) who received the RAMP award for the 2010-2011, 2011-2012 or 2012-2013 academic year, and (3) are you willing to participate in two digitally recorded individual face-to-face interviews with the first lasting approximately 90 minutes and the second lasting approximately 60 minutes. If the principal did not meet the inclusion criteria, the researcher thanked them for their time and excluded the principal from the study.

If the principal met the inclusion criteria and was willing to participate in this research study, the researcher scheduled the first interview on a day, time and location most convenient for the principal. The researcher informed the principal that she will mail a packet via postal mail to the principal that will contain a cover letter that explains the purpose of the research study, the first interview protocol, and screening form for the principal to complete and retain and will be collected by the researcher at the first interview. The principal was given an opportunity to ask questions regarding the forms and the research study. The principal was made aware that they could discontinue their participation in this study at any time without recourse. The researcher thanked the principal for their time and consideration.
APPENDIX D

SCREENING FORM
Appendix D

Screening Form

Screening Form

Instructions: This questionnaire is designed to obtain information that will be used to determine whether you meet the criteria for inclusion in this research study. Please answer all questions with a checkmark or by filling in the blank. All answers will remain confidential. Please do not write your name on this form. If you have any questions about this questionnaire, please contact me. Thank you.

Participant number: ________

Screening Questions:

1) Are you the principal who took part in the decision and implementation of the ASCA National Model in this school?
   □ Yes
   □ No

2) Are you currently the principal of this high school that received the RAMP award?
   □ Yes
   □ No

3) Did the high school receive the RAMP award in the 2010-2011, 2011-2012 or 2012-2013 academic years?
   □ Yes
   □ No

4) Would you be willing to participate in 2 digitally recorded interviews, one lasting approximately 90 minutes and the other lasting approximately 60 minutes?
   □ Yes
   □ No
APPENDIX E

COVER LETTER TO POTENTIAL PARTICIPANT
Appendix E

Cover Letter to Potential Participants

Dear (Participant Name):

Thank you for being willing to participate in my research study on the implementation of the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) National Model by high school principals in their schools.

I have chosen this dissertation topic because I believe that investigating the experience while implementing and the impetus for implementing the ASCA National Model is essential with assisting school counselors and principals with anticipating issues such as: how the decision is made, who makes the decision, who supports the decision, and steps that need to be taken in order to implement the ASCA National Model. Thus, I am studying the implementation of the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) National Model by high school principals in their schools.

My goal is to uncover information that will be useful to other school counselors and principals attempting to implement the ASCA National Model in their school.

This packet includes a screening form for you to complete and retain until our first interview which will take place on (the date we agreed upon for the interview). I will collect this form before the start of our first interview. For confidentiality, please do not write your name on the form. I will indicate a participant number on this form for identification and to ensure confidentiality.

This packet also includes the interview protocol which has the topics to be covered during the initial individual face-to-face interview. Please note that other questions may be asked based upon your responses to these questions. At the beginning of the first interview, you will be asked to sign the Consent Form for this research study and for your interview to be digitally recorded. Only those individuals who sign the consent form will be able to participate in this research study.

At the end of the first interview, you will be asked to schedule the second interview. This interview is to review and discuss a summary of your first interview transcription. You
will also have the opportunity to provide new or additional information regarding the implementation of the ASCA in your school.

Your confidentiality will be protected throughout the study. Your identity will be known only to me and my dissertation co-directors, Dr. Steve Rainey, Assistant Professor at Kent State University and Dr. Martin Jencius, Associate Professor at Kent State University. A peer reviewer will be consulted throughout the data collection and analysis process to provide feedback to the researcher. Identifying information will not be given to the peer reviewer. Pseudonyms will be used for the discussion and dissemination of the study’s findings.

Transcripts and digitally recorded interviews will be kept in a secure location and will be destroyed at the conclusion of the study. Results of the study will be published in a doctoral dissertation in Counselor Education and Supervision, presented at professional conferences and included in future scholarly publications. Participation in this research project is entirely voluntary. If you take part, you may stop at any time without incurring any recourse.

If you have questions about the study, please contact me at 330-612-2344 or via email at ralli@kent.edu. My dissertation advisors Drs. Steve Rainey and Martin Jencius can be reached at 330-672-2662. This project has been approved by the Kent State University Human Subject Review Board. If you have any questions about Kent State University’s rules for research, please call the Kent State University Institutional Board at 330-672-2704.

Sincerely,

Rabeena Alli, M.A., NCC, LPC
Doctoral Candidate
APPENDIX F

INTERVIEW ONE PROTOCOL
Appendix F

Interview One Protocol

All participants will be asked interview questions that were developed by the researcher. The interview protocol is designed to last approximately 90 minutes. Questions for each participant were as follows:

1. Prior to implementing the ASCA National Model, did your school have a comprehensive counseling program? If yes, please explain the program. If no, please explain the program you had in place.

2. How did you learn about the ASCA National Model?

3. Who initially advocated for the implementation of the ASCA National Model?

4. Who did you consult with when considering implementing the ASCA National Model?

5. Who was influential to you when deciding to implement the ASCA National Model?

6. What benefits did you consider when deciding to implement the ASCA National Model?

7. What drawbacks did you consider when deciding to implement the ASCA National Model?

8. What other factors did you consider when deciding to implement the ASCA National Model?

9. What support did you receive from assistant principal(s) when considering implementing the ASCA National Model?
10. What support did you receive from the superintendent when considering implementing the ASCA National Model?

11. What support did you receive from the board of education when considering implementing the ASCA National Model?

12. What support did you receive from school counselor(s) when considering implementing the ASCA National Model?

13. What support did you receive from other staff members when considering implementing the ASCA National Model?

14. What else would you like to share about your decision to implement the ASCA National Model in your school?

15. What assistance did you receive from the assistant principal(s) with implementing the ASCA National Model?

16. What assistance did you receive from the superintendent with implementing the ASCA National Model?

17. What assistance did you receive from the board of education with implementing the ASCA National Model?

18. What assistance did you receive from the school counselor(s) with implementing the ASCA National Model?

19. What assistance did you receive from other staff members with implementing the ASCA National Model?

20. What resistance did you receive while implementing the ASCA National Model?

21. Describe your overall experience with implementing the ASCA National Model.
22. Based on your experience with implementing the ASCA National Model, what do you wish you would have done differently?

23. What else would you like to share about your experience with implementing the ASCA National Model?

24. What advice would you give to a peer contemplating implementing the ASCA National Model?

Follow-up questions were asked as warranted.
APPENDIX G

CONSENT FORMS
Appendix G

Consent Forms

Consent Form

Study Title: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AMERICAN SCHOOL COUNSELOR ASSOCIATION (ASCA) NATIONAL MODEL: A FRAMEWORK FOR SCHOOL COUNSELING PROGRAMS BY HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPALS IN THEIR SCHOOLS

Principle Investigator: Dr. John Steve Rainey
Co-Investigator: Rabeena Alli

You are being invited to participate in a research study on the implementation of the ASCA National Model by high school principals in their schools. I have chosen this dissertation topic because I believe that investigating the experience while implementing and the impetus for implementing the ASCA National Model is essential with assisting school counselors and principals with anticipating issues such as: how the decision is made, who makes the decision, who supports the decision, and steps that needs to be taken in order to implement the ASCA National Model.

If you decide to take part in this study, you will be asked to participate in two digitally recorded individual face-to-face interviews with the first lasting approximately 90 minutes and the second lasting 60 minutes. These interviews will be scheduled at a time and location most convenient for you. All digitally recorded interviews will be destroyed at the end of the research project and only limited demographic information will be included in the final project. Each participant will choose a pseudonym for data presentation. All information will be kept in a secure location and will only be accessed by the researcher. The findings of this research will be published in a doctoral dissertation in Counselor Education and Supervision, presented at professional conferences and included in future scholarly publications.

If you take part in this research project, a potential benefit may be providing you with the opportunity to reflect on your experience with implementing the ASCA National Model.
in your school. The interview questions are intended to allow you to reflect on this experience. Examples include: “Describe your overall experience with implementing the ASCA National Model?” “How did you learn about the ASCA National Model?” and “Who initially advocated for the implementation of the ASCA National Model?” Your participation may also benefit school counselors and principals desiring to implement this model. Taking part in this project is voluntary and you can discontinue your participation at any time without penalty. There are no anticipated risks beyond those encountered in everyday life.

If you have questions about the study, please contact me at 330-612-2344 or via email at ralli@kent.edu. My dissertation advisors Drs. Steve Rainey and Martin Jencius can be reached at 330-672-2662. This project has been approved by the Kent State University Human Subject Review Board. If you have any questions about Kent State University’s rules for research, please call the Kent State University Institutional Board at 330-672-2704. You will be provided with a copy of this consent form.

Sincerely,
Rabeena Alli, M.A., NCC, LPC
Doctoral Candidate

CONSENT STATEMENT(S)

I agree to take part in this project. I know what I will have to do and that I can stop at any time.

____________________________________  ____________________________________
Signature                                      Date
Digital Recording Consent Form


I agree to participate in a digitally recorded interview about high school principals implementing the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) National Model: A Framework for School Counseling Programs in their schools. As part of this project and for the purposes of data analysis, I agree that Rabeena Alli may digitally record this interview. I know what my participation in this study will require and that I can stop at any time without incurring penalty. The date, time and place of the interview were mutually agreed upon.

________________________________________  _______________________
Signature                                      Date

I have been told that I have the right to listen to the recording of the interview before it is used. I have decided that I:

_____ want to listen to the recording  _______ do not want to listen to the recording

Sign below if you do not want to listen to the recording. If you want to listen to the recording, you will be asked to sign after listening to them.

________________________________________  _______________________
Signature                                      Date

Rabeena Alli  may / may not  use the digital recordings made of me. The original recording or copies may be used for:

___ this research project  ___ publication  ___ presentation at professional meetings

________________________________________  _______________________
Signature                                      Date
APPENDIX H

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE
Appendix H

Demographic Questionnaire

Instructions: This questionnaire is designed to gather information about you relevant to this study. Please do not put your name on this form. All information will remain confidential. If you have any questions about this questionnaire, please contact me. Thank you.

Participant number: ________

1. Age:____________________________________________________________

2. Gender:___________________________________________________________

3. Marital Status:_____________________________________________________

4. Children: Yes: ________ No: ________ If yes, how many? ________________

5. Race/Ethnicity:_____________________________________________________

6. Educational background:_____________________________________________

7. Occupation prior to being a high school principal:_____________________

8. How long where you in that occupation prior to being a principal:________

9. How long have you been a high school principal? _______________________ 

10. How long have you been a principal at this school? _____________________
APPENDIX I

INTERVIEW TWO PROTOCOL
Appendix I

Interview Two Protocol

All participants will be asked the following questions:

1. The transcript you received does it accurately represent our first meeting? If not, why?

2. Are there any corrections that need to be made to the transcript? If yes, please describe.

3. As you read the transcript, are there any sections that you would like to clarify or explain in greater detail? If yes, please describe.

4. What thoughts, if any, have you had since our last meeting about your experience while implementing and the impetus for implementing the ASCA National in your school?

5. Is there any component that you feel was left out? If yes, please describe.
REFERENCES


Counseling Outcome Research, University of Massachusetts, School of Education.


